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NEW MURABBA



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Jan Epps has worked at the Comer, Ga., post office for 23 years

Photograph by Kendrick Brinson for TIME

On the Cover: Photograph by Jonathan Rashad for TIME



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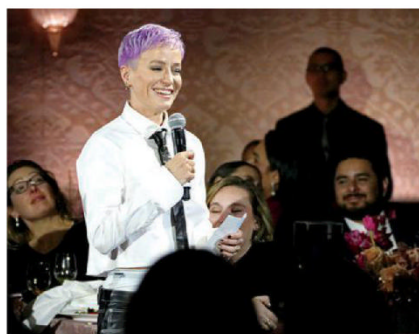


From left: Quinta Brunson, Ayisha Siddiqa, Phoebe Bridgers, Jessica Sibley, Cate Blanchett, Masih Alinejad, Angela Bassett, Olena Shevchenko, Megan Rapinoe, Ramla Ali, Verónica Cruz Sánchez



WOMEN OF THE YEAR

On March 8, International Women's Day, TIME hosted its second annual Women of the Year gala at the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, honoring the 12 actors, activists, and artists recognized in 2023. The honorees used the event to call for pay equity, diversity in the film industry, and even read an original poem. As TIME CEO Jessica Sibley described the common denominator among the group: "You are all driving change and making history." Read more about the list and watch video profiles at time.com/women-of-the-year



Above left: Sibley and Iranian activist Alinejad; above: Hollywood stars Blanchett, Bassett, and Brooke Shields; left: soccer champ Rapinoe; below left: Blanchett, right, and Rita Moreno; below: indie rocker Bridgers performs



The Parent Files

In a new series, Charlotte Alter—senior correspondent and mother of a 1-year-old—talks to newsmakers about how parenting has shaped their work and life. Find her interview with Whitney Wolfe Herd on page 72, and the whole collection—including Mark Cuban, Marie Kondo, and more—at time.com/parent-files

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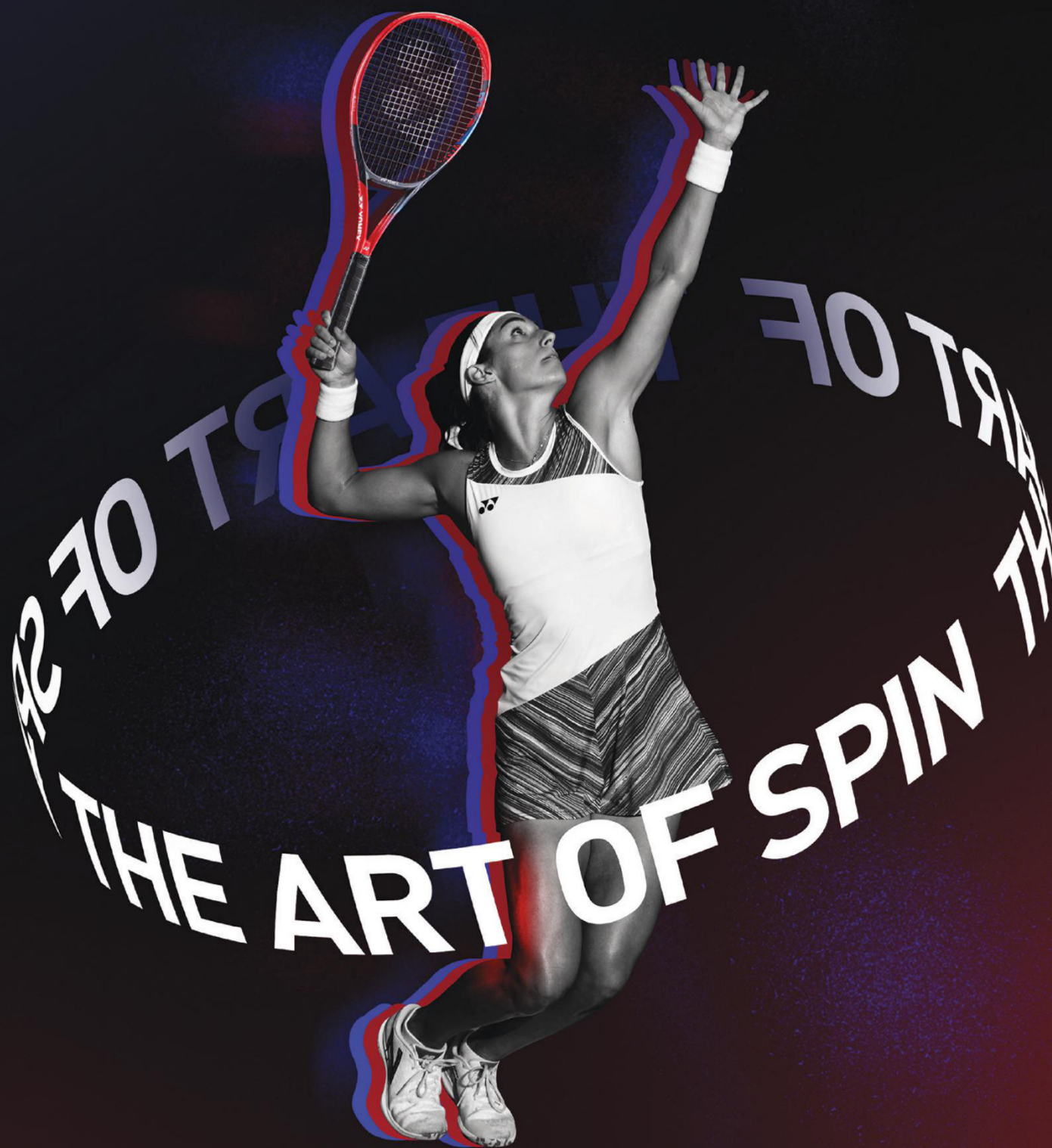
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The Brief

BIDEN'S BIG OIL TRUCE

BY JUSTIN WORLAND/HOUSTON

Opening a wilderness to drilling, the President recasts relations with an industry he'd vowed to phase out



INSIDE

WHY THERE AREN'T
ENOUGH HOUSES FOR SALE

DISABILITY-RIGHTS ACTIVIST
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A SOLAR-POWER BOOM
IN THE LEVANT

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S MARCH 13 decision to approve the Willow project, a multi-billion-dollar oil-drilling development in the Alaskan wilderness, may have come as a shock to those accustomed to Joe Biden's criticism of the oil and gas industry. But it didn't come out of nowhere. In the past two years, unforeseen circumstances—including energy prices and the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)—have nudged the Administration to work with oil companies. The Willow project, spearheaded by ConocoPhillips, is just the latest development in the Biden Administration's evolving relations with the industry.

The dynamic was on full display earlier in the month at the world's most influential oil and gas conference, CERAWeek by S&P Global. Biden entered office promising to phase out oil and gas, but top Administration officials still flew to Houston to make the case for the oil and gas industry to embrace the transition from fossil fuels to green energy. "We need to not be polarized here," John Kerry, Biden's climate envoy, told a room packed with energy executives on March 6. "We need to collaborate."

The reasons for the détente are easy to understand on both sides. High energy prices have threatened the Administration's economic goals, pressuring Biden to switch tactics. And it has not escaped the notice of oil companies that the IRA contains provisions they are well suited to implement, and profit from.

So while the Administration and the industry may not be friends, circumstances have unfolded to make them not quite enemies, either. How they navigate the complicated relationship will shape how the fight against climate change proceeds in the coming years.

TO UNDERSTAND HOW relations between Biden and the oil and gas industry have changed, it's helpful to look back in time. On the campaign trail, Biden promised to halt new drilling on federal land, and, within days of taking office, he canceled the permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline, signaling that he would resist the oil industry.

At the time, the risks appeared minimal. Oil and gas seemed to be an industry in decline. The stock price of big energy companies had plunged. Oil prices were low, and so was what consumers paid at the pump. But that changed—first because of COVID-19 reopenings and, later, because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As energy prices skyrocketed, officials asked oil companies to ramp up drilling. The reception was chilly. The companies were already making solid profits, which stood to be reduced both by the expense of drilling and by expanding supply.

Then came the IRA, the biggest piece of climate legislation ever passed in the U.S. On the surface, it might seem as if big climate legislation would rankle the industry. Indeed, the law funds technologies that compete with oil and gas. But, thanks in large part to West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin's sway over the text, the IRA is what energy experts describe as "technology neutral." It funds wind and solar, yes, but other provisions actually invite the industry to play a role in the energy transition. The law includes tax incentives for companies that capture carbon dioxide, it subsidizes hydrogen production, and it supports the production of biofuels. Oil and gas companies have been working on those technologies for years, though much of it has lingered on the back burner. The promise of billions in federal incentives changes that calculation. "You have the skill sets and knowledge to build some critical technologies at scale," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told the crowd at CERAWeek. "You now have 10 years of IRA carrots you can take to the bank."

The industry sees the upside too, now that the IRA is law. "We believe there's opportunities within that legislation for our industry to continue to drive down emissions," says Frank Macchiarola, a senior vice president at the American Petroleum Institute.

Plenty of conflict remains, even after the Willow approval. Also in March, Biden proposed axing fossil-fuel subsidies as part of his budget (a statement of intentions, given that Congress writes budgets). And the industry is lobbying on a range of regulations, not to mention how the IRA is implemented. Still, the reception to the full-court press at CERAWeek was surprisingly warm. Gigantic conference rooms hosting Biden officials were packed, and officials received generous—if not zealous—applause.

Jigar Shah, who is overseeing hundreds of billions of dollars in loans for clean-energy projects as the head of the Department of Energy's loan office, told attendees that he noticed the enthusiasm. "People have been very open to asking me tough questions, which I feel is good," he said. "You know, they could just ignore me."

All of this leaves the climate movement in somewhat of a strange place. The most significant climate law ever enacted relies, at least in part, on incumbent energy players' embracing new technologies after decades of seeking to slow the energy transition. And those players now have significant financial incentives to decarbonize.

At CERAWeek, TIME asked John Podesta, the Biden adviser leading IRA implementation, about ties between the Administration and the industry. "If they want to play clean," he said, "we welcome them to the party." □

**'If they
want to
play clean,
we welcome
them to
the party.'**

—JOHN PODESTA,
SENIOR WHITE HOUSE ADVISER,
ON THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY



Everything, every win

Actors Ke Huy Quan and Jamie Lee Curtis celebrate as *Everything Everywhere All at Once* wins Best Picture at the 95th Academy Awards. The film from directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert won the most major-category Oscars ever at the March 12 ceremony when it netted seven awards in total—including Michelle Yeoh’s historic Best Actress award.

THE BULLETIN

Scientists sound the alarm over a growing trash problem in space

SIXTY-SIX YEARS AGO, THERE WAS a single human-built object in earth orbit: Sputnik, the world’s first satellite. Today, there are 100 trillion objects circling the planet. That’s the jaw-dropping number cited by international researchers in an open letter published March 9 in *Science*, calling for a global treaty to curb the ever-growing debris belt in low-earth orbit.

DANGEROUS DEBRIS The junk belt includes 9,000 active satellites. Then there are the spent boosters, stray bolts, and floating paint chips that go along with launching all of that hardware. Orbiting the earth at 28,200 km/h (17,500 m.p.h.), even the smallest pieces of rubbish can strike an object like a bullet. Astronauts aboard the International Space Station

must routinely shelter in the attached Soyuz or SpaceX spacecraft to wait out a passing swarm of debris in case the station gets catastrophically struck and they have to bail out in a hurry. Ultimately, the debris will fall back to earth and incinerate in the atmosphere, but we’re replacing the junk at a faster pace than orbits decay.

TIME FOR A TREATY The researchers liken the space trash problem to the mess we’ve made of the oceans. The difference: we’ve had centuries to foul the oceans and only decades to do the same in space. In March 2022, world leaders signed a global plastics treaty to curb mounting plastic waste in the oceans and eliminate what is already there. Similar initiative should be taken now, the authors write, to

implement treaties that hold both government and commercial space-launch services liable for minimizing the amount of debris their launches create, deorbiting satellites after they’ve reached the end of their functional life, and developing technologies to clean up at least some of the rubbish.

TIDYING UP A species that is smart enough to reach space—certainly more difficult than learning to sail (and foul) the oceans—should be smart enough not to make a mess once it gets there. As Moriba Jah, a co-author and associate professor of aerospace engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, put it in a statement: “Marine debris and space debris are both an anthropogenic detriment that is avoidable.” —JEFFREY KLUGER

GOOD QUESTION

Why aren't there any houses to buy?

BY ALANA SEMUELS

MORTGAGE RATES ARE RISING, AND THE HOUSING market appears to be softening nationwide. But in many U.S. markets, would-be buyers are facing a big problem: there's just nothing to buy. Housing inventory—the number of homes on the market—has been falling since the rebound from the Great Recession, as investors snapped up homes and more older Americans decided to age in place.

Some housing analysts predicted that inventory would start to climb as builders scrambled to finish more new homes. But in markets where there's not a lot of new construction, inventory is hovering near historic lows, according to data crunched by Redfin and provided to TIME.

"I don't think I've ever seen it this bad," says Becky Koladis, who has been a real estate agent in Hartford, Conn., for 23 years. In December, Hartford had just 1.4 months of housing supply, meaning it would take just 1.4 months to sell all the homes on the market at the current pace of demand; in February 2019, by contrast, it had 5.9 months' supply. In decades past, economists would say that a balanced housing market has four to six months of supply.

One reason inventory is so low nationally is that many homeowners were able to lock in record low interest rates in 2020 and 2021. Mortgage rates have skyrocketed since then—the rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage reached 6.7% on March 9, nearly double that of a year ago, according to Freddie Mac. That means that homeowners who bought or refinanced with low interest rates are reluctant to sell their homes and buy another with a mortgage with a much higher rate. The low inventory makes house hunting an even more painful and emotionally charged process than usual. Buyers have to choose between paying a high price for the available inventory, and waiting—potentially for a long time.

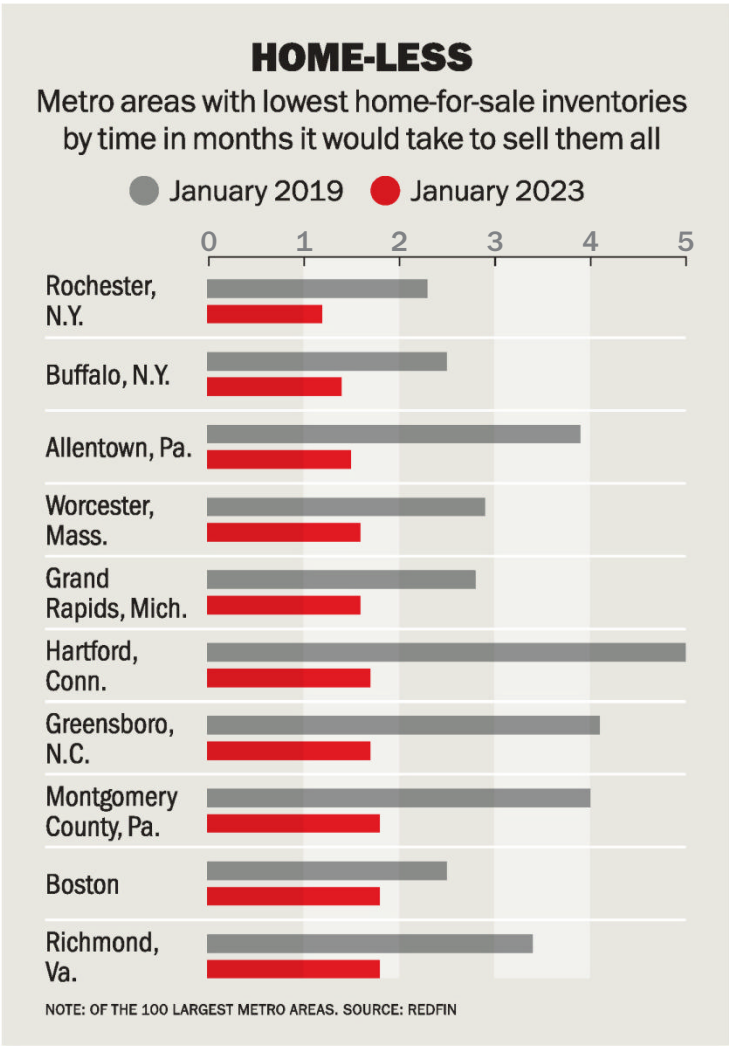
IN JANUARY, THE LOWEST INVENTORIES in the nation's 100 largest metro areas were in Rochester, N.Y.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Allentown, Pa.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Worcester, Mass.; Greensboro, N.C.; Hartford; Boston; and Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Aside from Boston, these aren't markets typically mentioned in the same sentence as *housing crunch*. But there are a few reasons that these Northeastern metropolitan areas are seeing such low supply, says Daryl Fairweather, Redfin's chief economist. First, they're seen as relatively affordable,

so people who have been priced out of places like New York City are heading to smaller markets to be able to own a house. Second, they're in the dense Northeast, where there's not a lot of land to build on, and so there's not a lot of new construction happening. A third reason is the influx of investors who have bought properties, including single-family homes, to rent. Investors bought 24% of all single-family homes in 2021, up from around 15% to 16% each year going back to 2012, according to a Pew Stateline analysis. "Institutional investors are ... making this market more difficult," says Peter Chabris, a real estate agent in Cincinnati, where in February three homes went into contract for every new one that was listed, he says. "It's stressful, it's highly competitive, and it's emotionally challenging."

It's also something buyers across the country are going to reckon with as spring—the traditional home-buying season—approaches and mortgage rates continue to rise. The Federal Reserve has steadily raised interest rates in an effort to tame inflation, and Fed Chair Jerome Powell suggested in recent congressional testimony that the agency would likely need to continue to ratchet up those rates.

Winifred Jones has been trying to buy a home for six years. She wants a multifamily property in Hartford so that her adult children can live with her and have their own space. Every year, she says, there's been more competition and more investors outbidding her with cash. She and her real estate agent are now trying to find would-be sellers before they officially list their properties for sale. She's not optimistic. "There's just nothing to bid on," she says. "It's either way overpriced or not worth it for the money."

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'I don't think I've ever seen it this bad.'

—BECKY KOLADIS, REAL ESTATE AGENT, HARTFORD, CONN.

RESUMED

Diplomatic relations between **Iran and Saudi Arabia** after talks mediated by the Chinese government in Beijing, on March 10; the Gulf archrivals severed relations in 2016.

LAUNCHED

Two **cruise missiles** from a submarine by North Korea on March 12, about a day ahead of joint U.S.–South Korean military drills.

CONVICTED

Prominent South Carolina **attorney Alex Murdaugh**, of the 2022 murder of his wife and son, on March 3; he was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

CELEBRATED

The 10th anniversary of his papacy by **Pope Francis** on March 13.

DIED

► Pioneer for women and family rights in Congress, former Colorado Democratic **Representative Pat Schroeder**, at 82 on March 13.
► Inventor of the high-jump technique the Fosbury flop, American **Olympic champion Dick Fosbury**, at 76 on March 12.

**DIED**

Judy Heumann

Disability-rights activist

BY REBEKAH TAUSSIG

WHEN I LEARNED THAT JUDY HEUMANN had passed away on March 4 at 75, I felt anxious in a way I struggled to explain. Judy became disabled by polio around the same age I became disabled by cancer—both as toddlers. Raised in 1950s Brooklyn, Judy grew up in a world that never expected her to join it. When her mom hoisted her up the stairs to their local school in her chair, the administrator refused to let her attend, saying Judy was a fire hazard. After a long fight and years later, Judy was allowed into a public-school basement classroom with other disabled kids ages 9 to 21. They did worksheets, took naps at their desks, and, if they graduated, were expected to work in a sheltered workshop. It was like the world handed Judy the script for the story we're all playing out, assigning her the role of helpless cripple. Judy glanced at it, then set it on fire. Even as a child, she expected the world to bend to her story, not the other way around.

I grew up in 1990s Kansas. I was able to go to school with my peers. There were curb cuts, accessible parking spaces, and a ramp at the library. Still, one of my earliest memories is of my dad arguing with the staff of a roller rink, insisting it was perfectly safe to take me out on the rink in my hot pink wheelchair. They

insisted it wasn't. We didn't have to leave; we just couldn't participate. Of course we left. I learned to avoid occasions for sideline inclusion, and even today, I know how much easier it is to skip the stares and work-arounds, and just stay home.

JUDY BELIEVED IN HER STORY of belonging so deeply that she demanded it be made a reality. She sued the New York City board of education when they denied her a teaching certificate because she couldn't walk. When she was removed from a plane for not having a support person, she sued the airline. In 1977, after waiting years

for the government to sign regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Judy led protesters into a federal building and refused to leave. After nearly a month, they got the signature they needed. This resistance led directly to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), one of the most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation for disabled people. It was signed when I was 4.

But the script Judy set on fire didn't disappear. Rewriting the story of disability for a society takes relentless tending and insisting. In 2017, there was an unsuccessful push in Congress to diminish some of the power of the ADA. People with disabilities experience higher rates of poverty and incarceration, are less likely to attend college, and are two times as likely to be unemployed as our nondisabled counterparts. One in 4 American adults has a disability, but the fullness of our lives is rarely represented onscreen. The tightness in my chest when I learned of Judy's death was fear. What will happen to the story of our belonging without her bold voice?

A few years ago, I moderated a panel she was on and watched

as she commanded the conversation, even from a Zoom screen. Her vision for what the future could be—a world where everyone is included—was so vivid. I believe her voice will only grow stronger with time, because the story she brought us is true. We belong, we belong, we belong here.



TIME selected Heumann for 1977 in its 100 Women of the Year project

Taussig is the author of *Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body*





CLIMATE

A solar revolution driven by power cuts

BY ADAM RASMI/BEIRUT

ABOUT 2,300 FT. ABOVE BEIRUT IN THE MATN DISTRICT mountains, Roger Mazloum and his brother Elias greet me on an unusually balmy winter day as they chop wood to help keep their early 20th century home warm before the cold returns. I'm no match for these burlier Lebanese men, who grew up in Broummana, a town about a dozen miles east of the Lebanese capital, but I take my turn, meekly swinging an ax at the tree stump before us. After a lackluster start, and plenty of patience from the pair, something akin to firewood begins to splinter off.

Roger takes me through the family home's front door—past a living room with traditional Lebanese floor tiles and artwork dedicated to Umm Kulthum, the Egyptian titan of Arabic music—and up the stairs to the roof. The pine-covered mountains and the Mediterranean Sea are a pleasant distraction, but the real purpose of the tour is to see the 18 solar panels slightly obscuring the vista. Like tens of thousands of Lebanese people, the Mazloums have turned to solar power to generate reliable—and cost-effective—electricity in

a crisis-stricken state that provides as little as one hour of power a day.

"In the past, even when the situation was normal, we used to have five, six, seven hours of power cuts a day," says Roger, as the three of us sip Arabic coffee on their balcony. He is referring to the period before an economic crisis began in 2019 that has seen the Lebanese lira lose more than 98% of its value against the U.S. dollar.

The state-run Electricité du Liban (EDL) has a generation capacity of around 1,800 megawatts, according to Pierre Khoury, director of the Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (LCEC), compared with the 2,000 to 3,000 MW the country needed before the crisis. But EDL provides only around 250 MW today, because the government struggles to pay for the imported fuel used to power the country's main electricity plants.

I lean over while Elias, a civil engineer by training, pulls out his Android phone. As the TBB Nova app he uses to manage the Mazloums' solar-power system shows, the 18 panels are generating

'This is my mission: kill the generator.'

—PHILIPPE EL KHOURY, CEO, ME GREEN

over one kilowatt per hour, enough to power their large, multigenerational home. He says that the solar panels and battery system—installed in July 2020 at a cost of over \$10,000—are saving the family between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a year in electricity and generator bills. “But the main thing is reliability,” Elias says. “For the last two years, we basically didn’t have power cuts.”

The Mazlouns are hardly alone in Lebanon. Solar panels have cropped up across the country over the past two years, from the rooftops of rural households and family-run businesses to urban apartments and multinational organizations. The country generated zero solar power in 2010 but had 90 MW of solar capacity in 2020; 100 MW were added in 2021, and 500 MW more in 2022. Khoury says the LCEC believes Lebanon could source 30% of its energy from renewables by 2030, which the government committed to in 2018, with solar power being “one major contributor.”

ATOP SEVERAL CAMPUS BUILDINGS at Sagesse University in Furn El-Chebbak, a suburb southeast of Beirut, row upon row of solar panels gleam under the bright afternoon sun. The Catholic university, home to some 3,500 students, is one of the many organizations in Lebanon that have turned to solar power. When I visit, Salim Nasr, a project manager at ME Green, is overseeing the last few steps of the installation of around 460 solar panels. “We are talking about

<
*Solar panels
at Beirut’s
Luna Park
amusement
center*

▼
*Solar panels
being installed
at Fouad Chehab
stadium in
Jounieh, Lebanon,
on Feb. 14*

300 kW peak, on a sunny day like this,” Nasr says, which is enough to power everything, including “lights, chillers, ACs, refrigerators, coolers, heaters.”

To keep costs down, the university has opted not to install a battery. The campus still relies on generators, but the panels cut their use by around 70%—an enormous financial saving, not to mention the green benefits of using less diesel. Lara Boustany, the president of Sagesse, says the decision to install the solar-power system is part of a wider green initiative on campus. “But we started with solar energy sooner than expected, because of the lack of electricity in Lebanon,” she says.

ME Green, which launched in 2010, was one of the early solar-power firms in Lebanon, but the sector has ballooned, from around 150 registered businesses in 2020 to more than 800 today. These companies work on everything from small household systems—which start at \$2,000 to \$3,500—to projects involving hundreds of panels or more.

“We wanted to start in Lebanon because you have an energy problem, and you have renewable energy resources, with more than 300 days of sunshine,” says Philippe El Khoury, co-founder of ME Green. Yet he, and others quoted in this story, have mixed feelings about the solar-power boom. On one hand, they say, it has undeniable environmental benefits. On the other hand, the benefits are piecemeal. EDL’s failure to provide electricity, coupled with a lack of large-scale solar farms and green infrastructure, means that overall Lebanon still relies more on heavily polluting generators. “The amount of CO₂ you are reducing from using solar panels, you are also turning on diesel generators for longer,” says Marc Ayoub, an energy expert at the American University of Beirut.

The real green solution, Ayoub says, needs to come at “the community level—villages, municipalities, regions. This is where you start having a big environmental impact.” But these kinds of projects need a level of investment that Lebanon’s cash-strapped government can’t deliver. Foreign lenders could step in, but experts say most are reluctant until the country finalizes a deal with the International Monetary Fund; talks over a \$3 billion loan contingent on reforms have been sluggish.

In the meantime, ME Green and other small companies are continuing to encourage solar power in Lebanon. El Khoury, the ME Green executive, sees every installation that his company completes as a victory against diesel-spewing generators. “Every time I kill a generator, I’m very happy,” he says. “This is my mission: kill the generator.”

It helps that solar power is now the most affordable source of new electricity globally, thanks to rapid technology gains and a glut in solar-panel production.

Back at the Mazlouns’ balcony, as we have our last sips of coffee, Elias says they hardly use generators anymore because “one, the sound; two, the maintenance; and three ... it’s not as efficient and reliable as the solar system.” It’s a conclusion many in Lebanon have come around to, regardless of the environmental considerations. “People are seeing the real benefits,” he says. “Look, at the end of the day, we are becoming green without even noticing it.” □





JADE PLANT

If these succulents break or get too big, “you can cut them and start new ones very easily,” says horticultural therapist Gary L. Altman

5 health benefits of houseplants

BY ANGELA HAUPT

COLLECTING AND CARING for houseplants boomed in popularity during the pandemic, especially among younger adults without abundant outdoor space. Americans spent \$8.5 billion more on gardening-related items in 2020 than in 2019, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Vibrant communities blossomed on social media, like the #PlantTok corner of TikTok, uniting plant parents and making it easy to swap tips (and mail one another cuttings). The consensus among these enthusiasts: plants are an accessible, interesting way to make an otherwise drab space more inviting, and there’s a unique thrill to watching them grow.

Plus, there’s a robust body of research indicating they make us happier and healthier. “I tell people, ‘Let them bring you life, the way you do to them,’” says Libby Bolles, who opened Fancy Leaf Plant Co. in Parrish, Fla., in 2021.

1. They’re soothing

“We hold our stress hormone, cortisol, in our saliva, and we know this is decreased when we’re around plants,” says Melinda Knuth, an assistant professor of horticultural science at North Carolina State University. Even looking at photos of plants has shown to have a **positive impact on stress levels**. In one study, when people in a hospital waiting room were exposed to either a real plant, a poster of a plant, or no nature, researchers found that both the real plants and the posters were linked with lower levels of stress.

ORCHID
Orchids can be slightly tricky to care for, but the payoff of fragrance and flowers is worth it



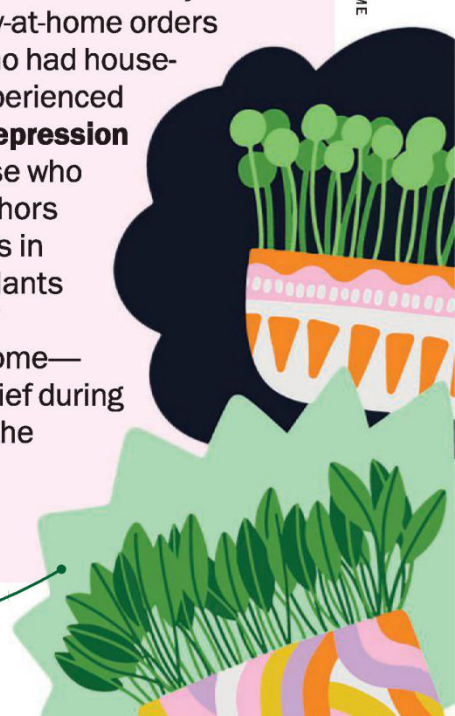
2. They can sharpen attention

Numerous studies have suggested **greenery is restorative and increases the ability to concentrate**, including among kids. One found that elementary-school-age kids in classrooms with a “green wall”—a vertical garden where living plants cover an indoor wall—scored better on measures of focused attention than kids in standard classrooms. Knuth says she has 50 to 60 plants at home, and 45 in her university office. The research supporting attention and concentration “is one of the reasons I justify having so many,” she says.

PEPEROMIA PLANT
Often called radiator plants because they enjoy warm drafts, peperomia typically have oval, fleshy leaves



MICROGREENS
It takes only about seven days to harvest them, says horticultural therapist Derrick Stowell



SPIDER PLANT

They’re very easy to propagate, which means lots of people enjoy giving their friends and family baby plants



3. They may speed up healing

Plants may quicken recovery from an illness, injury, or surgery. According to one paper, hospitalized people who had a view of plants or trees were **calmer and had better clinical outcomes**, including a reduced need for pain medication and a shorter hospital stay, compared with those who didn’t. “They found that simply looking at plants had some benefits,” says Derrick Stowell, past president of the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

4. They can boost happiness

The unofficial motto of the plant-loving community is “Plants make people happy.” It’s true: In one experiment, people who spent five to 10 minutes in a room with a few houseplants felt happier than those in a plant-free room. One research review found that **feelings of comfort and positivity increase the longer you spend with plants**; the authors noted that purple and green plants were particularly effective at reducing negative feelings. Being around plants is also linked with greater self-esteem and life satisfaction. “There’s an evolutionary response when you see green—it’s almost like you created yourself a sanctuary,” says Gary L. Altman, associate director of the horticultural-therapy program at Rutgers University. “It reduces feelings of fear and anxiety, and even if you’re angry, it’ll calm you down.”

5. They brighten up indoor life

According to the results of one study conducted during stay-at-home orders in Bulgaria, people who had houseplants or a garden experienced **fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety** than those who did not. The study authors theorized that this was in part because houseplants encourage feelings of being away while at home—providing welcome relief during prolonged periods in the same place.

TIME WOMEN OF THE YEAR

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BUSINESS

Luxury watches search for a different kind of green

BY ROBIN SWITHINBANK

AS WATCHMAKERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GATHER in late March in Geneva for one of the industry's biggest events—the Watches and Wonders fair—Switzerland-based Oris will announce a luxury diver's watch with a swirly blue and green dial. There's nothing remarkable in that, except that the dial of the Oris X Bracenet (2,350 Swiss francs, or \$2,508) is made of upcycled ghost fishing nets recovered from the ocean. Luxury watches have always been about communicating more than the time, and what this one gets across is its maker's sustainability program.

Oris became climate neutral in 2021 and frequently collaborates with conservation organizations. It stands out against others in the Swiss watch industry, which have been slow to respond to consumer appetite for products with a strong environmental profile.

The scale of the ambivalence was exposed five years ago when the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) published a report examining Swiss watchmaking's social and environmental impact, concluding that it “does not meet good environmental standards.” Well-known names like Rolex, Omega, and Patek Philippe were classified as “latecomers” and “nontransparent,” while only IWC received praise. (Oris wasn't included in the report.)

This could prove a thorn in the industry's side. Deloitte's 2022 annual report on the Swiss watch industry found “sustainability and environmental impact” is now the third most powerful driver behind a watch purchase (after brand and price) for buyers in China, the world's second largest importer of Swiss watches. With climate-conscious millennial and Gen Z consumers now purchasing luxury in greater numbers, the trend will likely gather momentum.

But the luxury-watch industry appears to be waking up. Strategies vary: last year, IWC hired supermodel Gisele Bündchen as an environmental and community-projects adviser, Chopard's watches contain only so-called ethical gold from traceable sources, while Panerai and Breitling have replaced wooden boxes with lower-impact packaging.

Damien Oettli, head of the markets team at WWF Switzerland, says that the industry has started to take the “first steps to address sustainability issues” but that “too many brands are still only paying lip service” to the problem.

The watch sector has recovered well from the pandemic, with record exports last year. But its growth has hampered its sustainability efforts. Richemont,

parent company of Cartier and Montblanc, said in its 2022 sustainability report that its emissions had increased from the prior year.

FOR CONSUMERS, LUXURY WATCHES with clear sustainability efforts remain scarce. Some brands, like Oris, have used recycled materials. Two years ago, Panerai said it had set a record for the watch with the most recycled components, claiming the Submersible eLAB-ID was 98.6% recycled by weight. Ulysse Nardin used recycled fishing nets for the Ocean Race Diver's case. Both were limited in production.

A more common approach for companies is to partner with an environmental project. Omega, for example, has helped fund conservation projects with the GoodPlanet Foundation, among other initiatives.

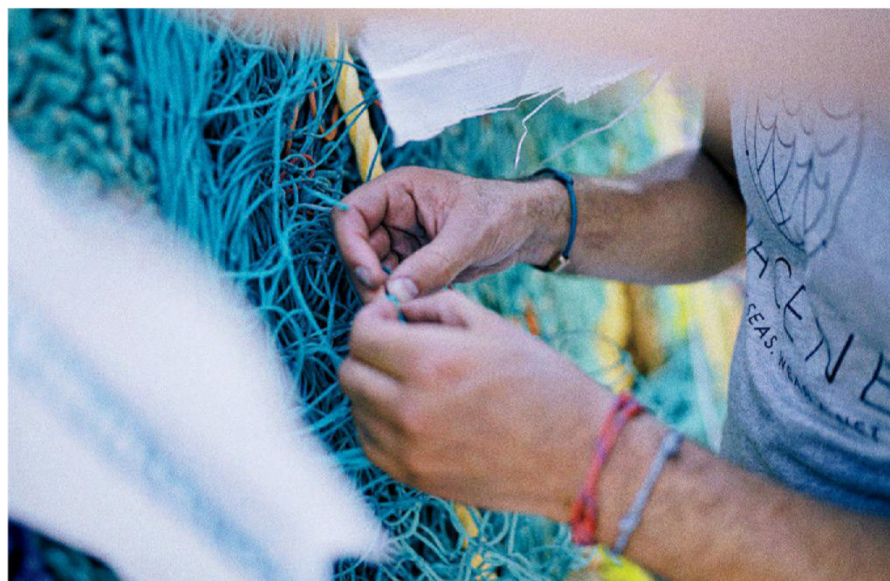
In the fall, Breitling used its Super Chronomat Origins to spearhead its switch to what it calls “artisanal gold” and lab-grown diamonds by the end of 2025. “These will be responsibly sourced from accredited suppliers and backed by end-to-end traceability,” says CEO

Georges Kern. “As a watchmaker, this is where we can use our influence.”

Other brands are teaming up. Last April, Cartier and luxury group Kering established the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030. The concept is similar to the Fashion Pact of 2019, which saw more than 250 companies commit to science-based targets and meeting the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Chanel, Gucci, IWC, and Jaeger-LeCoultre are among its 25 member brands. All have signed up to the U.N.'s 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

One thing brands engaged in sustainability agree on is their hold over consumers. “We have to reduce our footprints,” says Panerai CEO Jean-Marc Pontroué, “but also to educate and convince the wider public so that they become part of the change.” □

▼
The Oris X
Bracenet diver's
watch will
contain upcycled
fishing nets



**‘This is
where we
can use our
influence.’**

—GEORGES KERN,
CEO, BREITLING



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Crossing in crisis

Migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. face immigration personnel across barricades on the El Paso, Texas, side of the Paso del Norte International Bridge on March 12. A crowd of hundreds, mostly from Venezuela, rushed past controls in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, “posing a potential threat to make a mass entry,” a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman told AP. The cause was unclear, but migrants have struggled to make asylum appointments through a new U.S. government app overloaded by demand.

Photograph by Herika Martinez—AFP/Getty Images
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PARTNERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE RACE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE



Founded in 1918, Teijin's deep rooted corporate philosophy is to "Enhance Quality of Life in harmony with society and employees" with the means of sustainable technologies.

As a long-term vision, Teijin aims to become "a company that supports the society of the future" by leveraging diversity and innovation to add values to various industries and markets. It is crucial for Teijin to provide solutions for what society wants and stand by what is needed.

Teijin participates in the United Nations Global Compact. Supporting and following the basic principles relating to "human rights," "labour," "environment," and "anti-corruption" allows the company to pursue its vision for realising a greater world. Teijin is one of the first to engage in environmental initiatives, embarking on governance reforms in 1999, and promoting diversity and inclusion. In recognition of these efforts, Teijin has been included in multiple socially responsible investment indexes such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Asia/Pacific Indices, FTSE4Good Index series, and MSCI Japan ESG Select Leaders Index.

The top two of five priority issues Teijin is working on are "climate change mitigation and adaptation," and "achievement of a circular economy".

Teijin aims to reduce its own CO2 emissions by 30% from FY2018 levels by FY2030 and, in turn, achieve internal net-zero emissions by FY2050. A real milestone was becoming the first chemical manufacturer in Japan to acquire Science Based Targets certification, stating that its GHG reduction target is "a target level well below 2°C."

To achieve this goal, Teijin is working to introduce renewable energy and reduce energy consumption as well as introducing an internal carbon pricing system for the Group's capital investment. In addition, Teijin is evaluating each manufacturing process by visualising CO2 emissions throughout the product life cycle, including life cycle assessment (LCA) of carbon fibres, the first case in the industry.

The company is also at the forefront when contributing to the shift towards a "circular economy," in which, just like the natural ecosystem cycle, resources continue to circulate, and the "throwing away" concept does not exist. In 1995, Teijin became the first company in the industry to start selling "ECOPET", a recycled fibre derived from PET bottles, and it has been recycling para-aramid fibre "Twaron" for over 20 years.

Collaborating with partners to help leave a positive stamp on the world through new value and accelerated innovation is essential to solve environmental issues.

That is why since 2020, Teijin has been supporting the Envision Racing Formula E Team - racing in the world's first net-zero carbon sport which has eliminated the use of fossil fuels for high speed on-track action.

Cars are powered by electric motors which minimises the CO2 emissions associated with racing. The team is known throughout the paddock as the "greenest team on the greenest grid", being the first and only carbon-neutral certified team. The team works to inspire people across generations to take action in tackling climate change - pushing for a transition to e-mobility and renewable energy.

Accelerating the "Race Against Climate Change" is of extreme importance. As a partner of the United Nations, the team supported awareness-raising activities in the run-up to COP26 and continued activities related to the adoption of EVs.

The Envision Racing Formula E Team and Teijin have a shared vision, and are keen to promote awareness of climate change mitigation and adaptation to a wide range of stakeholders. By continually evolving the technologies and products that contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the automotive industry, we aim to increase awareness of a sustainable future.

To find out more: www.teijin.com



The View

ECONOMY

THE REAL BANK CRISIS

BY JEFFREY SONNENFELD AND STEVEN TIAN

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the Biden Administration's unprecedented response, guaranteeing deposits and backstopping regional banks, has catalyzed an important and necessary national conversation over what went wrong, and what can be done to prevent future crises. But SVB's fall has also set off a frenzy of mythmaking, ranging from ideological clichés to hyperbole. ▶

INSIDE

ISRAEL FACES A
GROWING POLITICAL CRISIS

WHAT THE OMICRON WAVE
MEANS FOR LONG COVID

A CHRISTIAN REVIVAL AND
A SENSE OF COMMUNITY



SVB clients speak to FDIC reps near a bank in Santa Clara, Calif., on March 13

These fact-free myths dangerously confuse the general public. Even more important, they obfuscate some of the genuine underlying drivers of SVB's collapse.

False narrative No. 1: Ideological opportunism: The fallout from SVB's collapse is much more of a political problem than it is an economic problem—and it is being driven by the politics of the left and the right.

Sadly, flagrant, clichéd ideological opportunism cuts across both sides of the aisle. On the far right, extremist, self-styled antiwoke warriors such as Vivek Ramaswamy and Josh Hawley are absurdly blaming “ESG” and “wokeism” for the demise of SVB. Their use of this politicized rhetoric is equivalent to somebody blaming their weight-loss program when they have to replace a tire on the car—it is just completely irrelevant. Likewise, on the left, progressive voices have rushed to blame greedy fat-cat corporate cronies and pointed the finger at lax regulation by government entities at the supposed beck and call of their corporate overlords. Frankly, even if SVB had been subject to stronger liquidity and capital requirements, it is hard to imagine what regulations could have abated SVB's most

foundational challenges, which are practically universal to all banks—an asset-liability duration mismatch and higher interest rates eroding the value of their securities. These are not challenges that can be regulated away, lest credit creation come to a complete stop.

False narrative No. 2: Hysterical hyperbole: Several financial-industry voices are wildly distorting President Biden's necessary emergency measures, which were designed to prevent spreading contagion from taking down even more banks and to make innocent depositors whole. While these emergency measures will have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences, there is zero intention to fundamentally transform the banking industry into a regulated utility or to permanently destroy all prospects of shareholder value creation. The overextrapolation of a set of interim emergency measures fosters more confusion and angst when sentiment is already eroding.

False narrative No. 3: Retrospective prophets: A few shameless commentators have seized on the SVB collapse to become retroactive prophets, crowing, “I told you so, I saw this coming,” when in reality, virtually none actually

did, and certainly none who said it on the record. While it's been said that those who can't predict accurately instead predict often to create a haze of distractions, the reality is these sudden seers, along with the SVB depositors and investors, were ambushed by reality. The structural challenges gnawing away at SVB were hardly unique to SVB—ranging from higher rates eroding the value of its securities to consumer-deposit withdrawals to its asset-liability duration mismatch—even if they were more exaggerated given SVB's rapid growth and tech-startup depositor base.

False narrative No. 4: Fighting last year's war with inflexible economic dogma at the Federal Reserve: We should make no mistake about one of the prime drivers underlying SVB's implosion—Fed overtightening not only killed this bank but may also send the economy into recession. The job of a central bank should be to provide steady steering to gently smooth cyclical peaks and valleys, not to violently jerk from one extreme to another. Unfortunately, by keeping rates at 0% for too long and then by raising rates by nearly 5% in less than one year to compensate, the Fed appears to be continuing to fight last year's war while failing to recognize the changes in the underlying environment as well as its own destructive impact on businesses across the nation, whose strategic planning has been derailed. In fact, any rational analysis of the underlying inflation data should reveal that inflation is already dramatically coming down across the board.

Clearly it is now past time for the Fed to pivot, and the full impact of one of the most rapid tightenings in Fed history is still yet to be felt amid signs of disinflation. With the collapse of SVB and other banks, the Fed will realize its waiting to act might bring down more businesses with dire implications for the whole economy.

Sonnenfeld is the Lester Crown Professor in Management Practice at Yale School of Management; Tian is the research director of the Yale Chief Executive Leadership Institute

THE RISK REPORT BY IAN BREMMER

Netanyahu faces his biggest test yet



AFTER MORE THAN 15 years, spread across three separate runs as Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netan-

yahu has plenty of hard-won political experience. He's never needed it more.

Deadly confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank have been building for the past year. As in the past, Israeli defense forces claim to have killed militants, while Palestinians charge that many civilians are among the dead. The result: the Israeli human-rights group B'Tselem has called 2022 the deadliest year in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in nearly 20 years, with an estimated 154 Palestinians killed. Palestinian attacks killed 25 Israelis and foreign nationals in the same period. So far this year, Israelis have killed 80 Palestinians, and Palestinian attacks have killed 14 Israelis.

Even more startling is the increasingly intense political battle among Israelis over changes proposed by Netanyahu to the authority of Israeli courts. His government has proposed a plan that would strip Israel's Supreme Court of much of its power in three ways. First, it would allow the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to override court decisions with a simple majority vote. Second, it would end the Supreme Court's right to strike down pieces of legislation that the court finds incompatible with Israel's Basic Laws, which serve as the country's constitution. Third, it would give elected officials

a greater role in selecting the judges who serve on the court.

SUPPORTERS OF THE PLAN say it's a long-overdue reform that will limit the ability of unelected judges to wield unchecked power over legislation created by the people's chosen representatives. That's especially true for those who say the court is dominated by activist judges who rule against them on im-

court should keep the right to strike down legislation that judges believe violate the Basic Laws. In fact, nearly half of voters who support Likud, Netanyahu's own party, agree.

That might explain why anti-government protests of recent weeks have been so large and loud. On March 11, weeks of demonstrations culminated as hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets in a display of antigovernment fury unprecedented in Israel's history. Adding to the drama, a showdown between the government's National Security Minister and Israel's Attorney General over how to respond underscored the depth of anger on both sides.

There are also fears that unless he makes major changes to the proposed judicial reforms, Netanyahu may soon be managing serious economic fallout. Venture-capital and tech firms have threatened to leave the country if the law is passed, and analysts both inside and outside the country have

warned that judicial reforms could lower the country's credit rating, sharply raise the cost of borrowing, and scare off foreign investment.

In recent years, Netanyahu has struggled to form majority governments without support from far-right parties and populist lawmakers that seek confrontation rather than compromise—including with Palestinians. The Prime Minister himself has proved an able political acrobat, one who can appease just enough people to keep the lights on and his government moving forward. But these are his biggest tests yet. □



Israelis protest efforts by the hard-right government to undercut the judiciary, in Tel Aviv on Feb. 25

migration laws, West Bank settlement policies, and military conscription for the ultra-Orthodox. Critics charge that Netanyahu, who is on trial now for allegations of corruption, wants to remove checks and balances on his power, dangerously undermining Israeli democracy by allowing any government that can muster 61 of 120 Knesset votes to enact whatever it can pass.

A solid majority of Israelis oppose the reform. A February survey from the Israel Democracy Institute, for example, found that about two-thirds of respondents say the



Health Matters

By Alice Park

SENIOR HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

As widespread as Omicron infections are now, one silver lining is that the variant seems to cause milder disease in most people. (It can still cause serious enough illness to result in hospitalization and death, but staying up-to-date on vaccines greatly reduces this risk, according to the latest data.) Now, there's early evidence suggesting that compared with earlier variants, **Omicron infections may be less likely to lead to Long COVID**, a lingering constellation of symptoms like fatigue, shortness of breath, anxiety, and depression that plague people postvirus.

In the latest study—which has not yet been published and will be presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases in April—researchers in Switzerland found the following among a group of health care workers:

- Over the 18 months they were studied, people infected with Omicron were no more likely to report symptoms following their infection than people who had not gotten COVID-19.
- Among those who were infected with the original SARS-CoV-2 variant, 67% reported continued symptoms 18 months after their infection.
- A person who got Omicron after being infected with the original virus was no more likely to report Long COVID symptoms than someone infected once with the original virus.

These results are not the last word on the issue. But they add to the data helping doctors understand what causes Long COVID, and how different COVID-19 variants affect both short- and long-term health.



For more health news, sign up for Health Matters at time.com/health-matters



Merch at last year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Orlando



The D.C. Brief

By Philip Elliott

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

OXON HILL, MD.—SARAH PALIN was gabbing with Kimberly Guilfoyle over my right shoulder. Representative Matt Gaetz and his entourage barreled through the conference center's shoulder-to-shoulder hallway, prompting many to gawk at what passes for political celebrities these days. And, seemingly everywhere as CPAC opened on March 1, the chatter kept returning to two men who appear to be on a crash course for the GOP presidential nomination: Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis.

Yet neither of those names was offered when I ran into one of the Republican Party's sharpest minds. "You take the top five. I'll take the rest of the field," he said with a laugh.

I joined the chuckle, knowing he was probably taking the smarter bet. Still almost a year before any votes are actually cast, **the GOP cast of contenders remains incredibly fluid.** More than two dozen other potential candidates are in the hunt in a party that still isn't quite sure what it's chasing. Even those polling at zero have a credible case to make for their viability.

For those who are convinced the primary race has already winnowed down to a two-way grudge match between the former President and the governor of Florida, consider the

2008 cycle: early polling predicted easy nominations for the likes of Rudy Giuliani and Hillary Clinton. Trump's brand at the moment has the juice, but it's unclear if it's grape that's destined to be grand wine or apple heading toward vinegar.

When you talk with the teams actually trying to win elections for rank-and-file Republicans, MAGA is not the playbook. In fact, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, one of his party's shrewdest strategists, has consistently dismissed Trump as a "diminished" figure and is doing everything he can behind the scenes to save the GOP from a repeat of the Trump era. The campaign arm of Senate Republicans is treading very, very carefully, hoping to hold on to Trump voters without pleading fealty to Trumpism. Former Speaker Paul Ryan is on a quiet quest to reboot the GOP as a party of policy and ideas—not of identity and celebrity.

Trump remains the loudest voice in the Republican Party, for sure. But loud is seldom a proxy for right, and it sure isn't a stand-in for where the party's actual voters are, even if they are mighty confused.

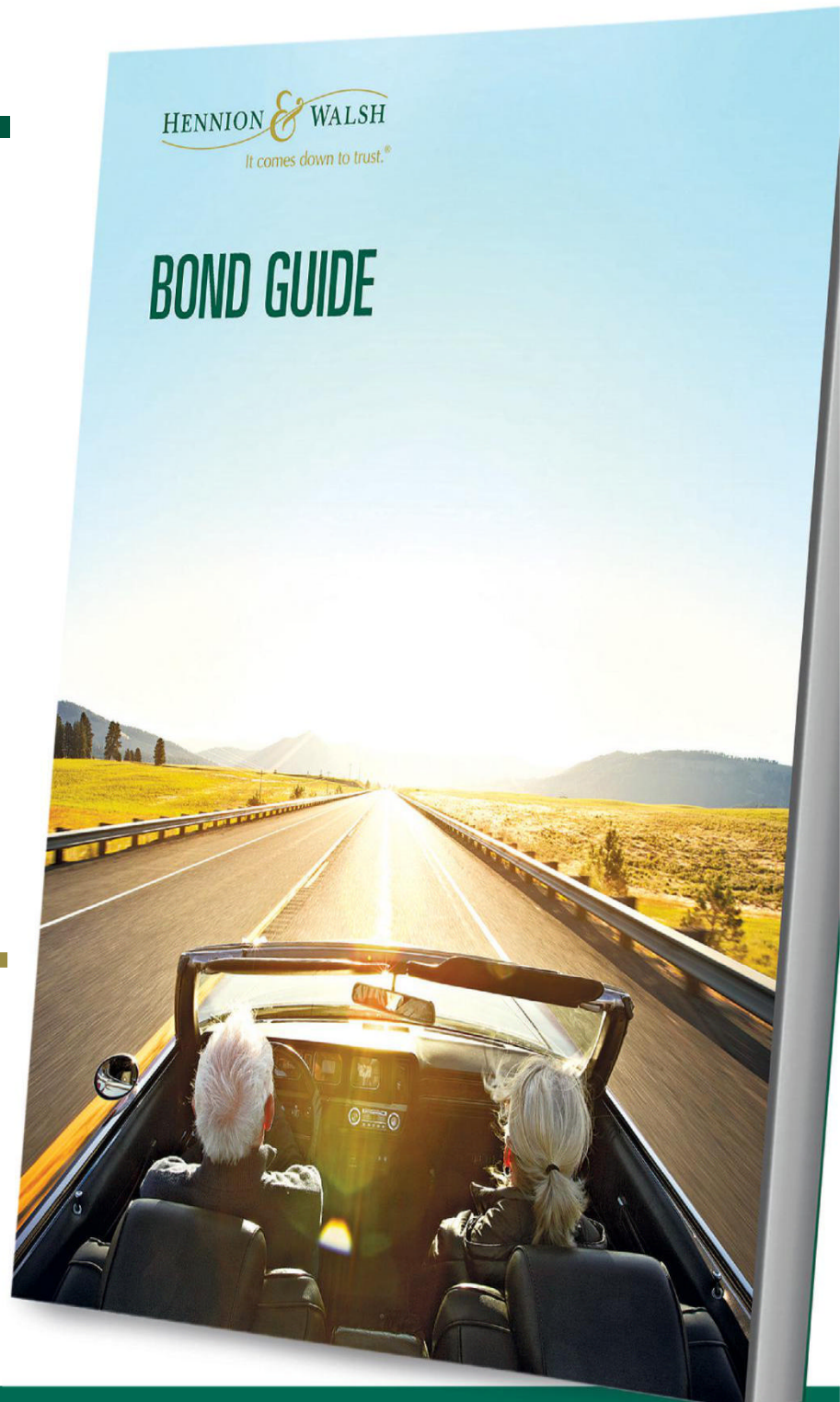


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NATION

Christian revival's unique opportunity

BY AARON GRIFFITH

SOMETHING HAPPENED AT ASBURY UNIVERSITY. MANY Christians called the weeks-long worship service at the small Wilmore, Ky., school, which attracted tens of thousands and disrupted campus life, a revival. Fervent worship and prayer that began during a Feb. 8, 2023, chapel service continued for hours afterward, then days, with word soon spreading globally through social media and national news coverage. Asbury administrators, noting that the school and town had been overwhelmed by the rush of outside visitors, officially ended the on-campus revival gatherings on Feb. 24. But a number of other universities have reported their own enthusiastic campus awakenings, leading excited Christians to contend this is evidence of an unprecedented movement of God across the nation.

The revival has had its fair share of skeptics, however, many of whom argue this is but another instance of embarrassing evangelical behavior. Two general critical trends have emerged, each of which has roots in long traditions of revivalist reproval. The first worries that revivals like Asbury's lack moral seriousness. One need only think here of the stereotypical image of cash-grabbing prosperity preachers swindling their way through the revival circuit, or the exacting evangelicals visiting the restaurant after worship who don't tip. Or, perhaps even worse, there is the fear that such revivals are a cover or propellant for problematic politics, akin to the collective effervescence of a Trump rally. And to be sure, some MAGA-style public figures have hailed the happenings in Wilmore, seeing it as part of a larger political surge that bolsters the religious right.

A second concern is that revivals like Asbury's are simply sites of emotional manipulation, that participants are being swept up in charismata that are artificial, designed to induce chill-bumps-on-arms responses. If a revival is simply the powerful surge of collective emotion, or the product of stagecraft, is it really real?

Indeed, some revivalists from past generations grew quite comfortable with exploiting material means. The 19th century preacher Charles Finney penned a manual that spelled out how to lead an effective revival. He did not see this strategy as insincere, but frustrated critics cried manipulation. Similarly, any evangelical church musician knows that if you hit the right chord at just the right moment, you are guaranteed more hands in the air. A student at the Christian college where I teach recently shared this concern with me when she spoke of her home church's routine revivalist stratagems, from the swells in worship music to lighting design. The Asbury revival appears decidedly low budget, without the fancy lights and rock-show aesthetics of other charismatic events. But my student's concern is very real:



**A true
revival
produces
results**

Given American evangelicalism's oversaturation of synthetic spirituality, can we ever really be sure we're experiencing God?

CHRISTIANS FROM GENERATIONS past have wrestled with both of these problems. What is real awakening, and what is artificial? Does revival require moral or political impact, and if so, what should it look like? The consensus interpretive key that most have landed on to address both concerns is to watch for the fruit of revival. A true revival produces results: demonstrably changed lives oriented toward holiness and justice.

Perhaps no American speaks of the hazards here as incisively as Frederick Douglass. In his 1845 *Narrative*, the then enslaved Douglass discusses his enslaver, who had just experienced conversion at a Methodist revival. Douglass reports his hope that the revival might make his enslaver kinder, or even lead him to consider emancipation. But it did the opposite, making him "more cruel and hateful in all his ways."

We should attend to Douglass's



warning: even when we note the need for transformation, a revival can still conceal or enable oppression. But for Douglass, the answer wasn't to reject revival or Christianity outright. The answer was to point toward the "Christianity of Christ," a religion characterized by love of neighbor and concern for the oppressed.

Still, even keeping Douglass's admonition in mind, it's hard to know what to do. It's hard because, by definition, a revival transcends our human understanding and comprehension. Insofar as it might have direct political or moral import, to expect a revival to have a logical behavioral outcome is to reduce its power. Procedure easily eclipses Pentecost.

Therefore, we might hope the Asbury revival results in dramatic social consequences, but we should be open to its resulting in changed lives that are surprising to us, that don't operate in accordance with given political preferences. For Douglass, true Christian revival logically entailed abolition, a movement that many of his day deemed strange and dangerous. We might wonder what

Students leading worship inside Hughes Chapel at Asbury University on Feb. 17

needed threats to the contemporary status quo could emerge from Asbury, and be open to how they might challenge our expectations.

OR PERHAPS WE WON'T EVEN KNOW. Perhaps there will be no revolution in the streets, because those who attend the revival simply needed to feel God's love in their own hearts. I certainly pray for that feeling on my own campus: American young adults are overwhelmed and overstressed, burdened by a violent nation, economic precarity, destructive social media trends, mental-health challenges, and general uncertainty about the future. When I asked Asbury professor David Swartz about the campus happenings, he told me that "before it became a public revival, this experience felt like a long exhale taken by my anxious students reeling from the pressures of COVID-19 and social media—and then an infilling of a holy calm." Maybe then the revival isn't really about our own understanding as outsiders, our need to know if and how God is at work. Instead, it's about what the students at Asbury or other college campuses need right here and now, and how God is meeting them where they are.

We might then carefully embrace the possibility of spiritual awakening even if we aren't exactly sure from whence it came or where it's going. Of course, beautiful music and gathered community affect us; there's a reason why even the most avid secularist is moved at the sight of natural beauty, or why it's possible to feel moved (as I have been, I admit) among a bunch of grooving hippies at a Phish concert. Christians have always been comfortable with the notion that God is present and active amid the mundane and the material (think the bread and wine of the Eucharist), even if the how remains a mystery.

The famed Harvard religion scholar Harvey Cox once wrote of a dinner gathering with similarly positioned educated elites: "I asked my table companions if any of them had themselves ever 'spoken in tongues' or 'prayed in the Spirit' as the Pentecostals say."

He continued, "There was an awkward silence. The priest glanced at his watch. The historian brushed crumbs from the tablecloth. The rest looked doubtfully at each other. None, it seemed, ever had. Nor had I, I admitted. They seemed relieved. But then I asked whether anyone had ever wanted to. Here again, the response was negative, and most seemed surprised when I revealed that I at times had wanted to."

This captures something that I think is true about revivals. At the end of the day, they may be flawed; they may sometimes be infiltrated by bad actors or produce meager moral results; they may be emotionally manipulative. In that, they are human, and in that, they resemble all of us. But when one sees a person who is overcome with the Spirit, who knows that God loves them and is working to transform their life for the good, the final word does not have to be interrogation or critique. Instead, it can be an opportunity for admiration—or even aspiration.

Griffith is a professor of history at Whitworth University and author of God's Law and Order

C L O C K



W I S E

SOCIETY

After three years of pandemic, our relationship with time has changed—maybe for the better

By Lily Rothman

IT WASN'T LONG AFTER THE PANDEMIC BEGAN that people around the world started to notice something weird was going on. As the rhythms of daily life changed, some people's days seemed to run together; others felt theirs stretched on indefinitely. The sense of what an hour felt like was corroding. News outlets filled with attempts to explain what was happening.

Ruth Ogden, an experimental psychologist who studies time perception at Liverpool John Moores University in the U.K., says she had only ever gotten maybe one interview request before the pandemic, and has since received at least a hundred. And while the study of time is certainly not new, she says the volume and pace of academic publication on the topic seem to have increased too. Studies published since early 2020 have suggested, in no particular order, that dragonflies process the movement of time very quickly while starfish do so slowly; that virtual reality and ADHD are both linked to difficulty judging how much time has passed; that time flies when you're making eye contact and seems to drag when you're guilty of hiding something. (And the International Bureau of Weights and Measures is even in the course of redefining the second, though that one's a coincidence.)

Another attempt to get to the bottom of things has just arrived in *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock*, a new book in which the artist Jenny Odell follows the threads she plucked in her best-selling 2019 debut, *How to Do Nothing*—which found an

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY PETE REYNOLDS
FOR TIME

eager audience in people looking for ways to shore up their souls against the drain of productivity culture—and arrives at a sweeping yet personal challenge to assumptions Western society makes about the relationships between individuals and the finite hours in a given day. COVID-19 was not the original impetus for the project; she says her interest was sparked when she kept hearing the odd complaint from readers that they wanted to do nothing, but simply couldn't find the time. Still, the pandemic not only provided a jolt to her writing process—if you're trying to blow up assumptions about time use, there's nothing like a worldwide shift in the way people spend their days to help the project along—but also helped create a world particularly eager to join in her re-examination.

Lockdowns ravaged the routines by which we used to define our hours; what had once seemed as sure as the ticking of a clock was exposed as mere social construct. And then there was the virus itself. "Everyone was faced with deaths, and really had that in their face every day," Odell theorizes. "So [the] question of 'How do I spend my time?' or 'What is my relationship to time?' becomes a lot more urgent."

Almost exactly three years after the WHO declared a pandemic, with so many of the lifestyle changes of COVID-19 reverting to the previous status quo, Odell's book arrives at what could be a turning point. The pandemic created a window in which almost everything, from office culture to trust in the government, could be up for debate. Time itself was no exception, which for many represented a major shift: the realization that decisions made by mere humans can shape something so fundamental. And once you've realized it, you also know that you have some control over your own experience of it.

NOW, IN THE RETURN to "normal," we'll find out if what we learned will stick, and perhaps give us new models for a happier relationship with time.

To be sure, time in a physics sense, rather than a psychology sense, is a different story. There, it takes something like a black hole, not a lockdown, to mix things up. Perhaps fittingly, then, Carlo Rovelli, the Italian physicist and author behind 2017's *The Order of Time*, says he doesn't see the past few years as likely to have changed much in this area. And if widespread reflection did have an impact, he doesn't see that lasting once the crisis passes.

But that reversion, others argue, is not a foregone conclusion.

"I think people don't quickly forget that there was a one-to-three-year period of their lives where they lived in a very different way than before," says Oliver Burkeman, author of the popular 2021 book *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals*. "A 5% difference in how you spend your time as a result of an experience like the pandemic is huge."

Which way does Odell think things will break? "Only time will tell," she deadpans, but adds, "I do think there are certain things—once you've seen them, you can't unsee them."

What Odell can't unsee is the fact that the pre-pandemic mainstream Western way of thinking about time isn't the only way. Her



conclusion, after studying how those norms came about and how they're put to use today, is that time is not so much money but power.

When people say they don't have time, what they mean is they don't have control. That lack of autonomy may come from a demanding boss, an internal voice, or existential-level problems like climate anxiety. Odell uses the concept of a *zeitgeber*, from the German for "time giver," to discuss the systems that determine how our experiences of time are structured; the examples she gives range from a child's school schedule to the user-experience design of a gig-work app.

One way for the powerless to find some control, she posits, is to reject the most basic assumptions of the system that keeps them down. In Indigenous societies, for example, she finds alternatives to the kind of clock-based living that can feel natural but isn't. (In fact, she believes, rigid ways of thinking about the future are holding us back from productive attitudes toward the fate of the planet.) Her own epiphany during the pandemic was that her time was not so much hers as it was created within relationships. One clear example she cites in the book is the siesta, a time-use norm that exists only as long as a culture decides collectively that it should. She pushed herself—while acknowledging the privilege of being able to do so—to see hours not as a personal resource to expend, but as a material that was molded by the way she and others chose together to use it. "It was almost as if a grid had been lifted off the topography of time," she recalls.

Of course, Odell wasn't the only one encountering a new experience of time. Researchers like



Ogden, the psychologist, moved their work outside the lab because of COVID-19 and took advantage of the unprecedented moment to conduct studies all over the world asking people how the pandemic affected their impressions of time. The fact that having your life messed with can alter the experience of time's passage isn't a new revelation; as Ogden pointed out in one paper that came out of her work during this period, decades of studies, including of families locked in fallout shelters during the 1960s, confirmed that life feels different if you stop being told what time it is. But, she argues, the pandemic was the first significant proof that it doesn't take a nuclear bunker to see that effect: you can be in your home, with your roommate, the clock on your microwave glowing, your inbox filling with emails, and still feel that the hours have come unglued from expectation. And those studies arrived just at a moment when people were inclined to be interested in the results.

That's because, Ogden suggests, "you had this period of time in which life stopped, but time continued. And I think that got us all much more aware of the idea that time is finite, and it's valuable. And when it's lost, or when you can't control it, it feels weird, and you want to know why it feels weird."

That said, this shift might not have happened were it not for a conference held years before the pandemic. When Marc Wittmann, a cognitive neuroscientist at the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health in Freiburg, Germany, was a doctoral student a few decades back, he says, even a major neuroscience or psychology conference might have just one symposium or presentation related to time. Then, about a decade ago, the E.U. supported a networking drive that brought together time and timing scholars across countries and disciplines. It all culminated in 2014, in Corfu, Greece, at the first International Conference on Timing and Time Perception.

Since then, Wittmann says, there's been a "snowball effect" of interest: more people are getting professorships related to their focus on time perception, and those professors have students, and those students become professors who study new aspects of time.

Argiro Vataakis, an experimental psychologist at Panteion University in Athens and an organizer of that Corfu conference, says the biggest change in the past decade is an increase in research that focuses on questions relevant to everyday life. The pandemic only furthered that trend. "Now the fact that we lose track of time or time seems to pass fast or slow," she says, "became on the forefront of what people were talking about."

Case in point: Wittmann and Vataakis are among the 32 contributors to the "Blursday database," which compiles survey results from nearly 3,000 people in nine countries who were asked about their experience of time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those studies confirmed, among other findings, that "the less isolated individuals felt [during lockdown], the closer in time past and future events seemed to be."

In other words, isolation makes time drag. In the absence of commutes,

many of us learned something similar to Odell's takeaway: that our days can be shaped instead by community—and maybe that's a better way to live.

OF COURSE, KNOWING that the brain's experience of time can be shaped by our relationships doesn't necessarily mean it's easy to reset our internal clocks; if you don't feel in control of your time, that's not necessarily your fault. Where Odell concerns herself with the systemic societal and economic structures that constrain us, Ogden cautions that the way trauma alters one's experience of time's passage is a biological process that can't be self-helped away.

That said, there are certain things that people who spend all day thinking about time do to seize what control they can over it.

Ogden, for one, finds comfort in using her knowledge of the fallibility of time perception to remind herself that negative periods came to an end faster than it perhaps seemed they did. Wittmann says he is more aware of the way that breaking out of one's emotional routine can keep it from feeling as if the fun times are flying by too quickly: looking for additional depth in your feelings, he says, can create the kind of variety that can make a good moment seem to have lasted. Vataakis, for her part, hopes her current research project, meant to figure out how to purposefully modulate our experience of time in order to increase well-being, allows us to use our knowledge of time's malleability to live better lives, rather than suffering passively the fickleness of the clock. And with the Blursday data available online, there's hope that this era's trove of studies will inform time-perception research for years to come.

As for Jenny Odell, she has come out of the project of *Saving Time* preaching a kind of mindfulness marked by "a loving, curious, fascinated feeling of interest" in time, as she puts it: living in the now without thinking about it so much that it can't be enjoyed; seeing time as a series of moments, each as rich as the meaning we put into it. She finds that balance in nature, in collective action, in friendship—appropriate for someone who now defines time as both the context for and the output of relationships.

Maintaining that perspective is anything but simple, and is sure to only get harder as the gravity of the pre-pandemic status quo gets stronger. But maybe it'll be easier if we know we're not alone in the quest. Together, it turns out, we can make time for ourselves. □

**'Life
stopped,
but time
continued.'**

—RUTH OGDEN,
EXPERIMENTAL
PSYCHOLOGIST

The Mail Man

INITIALLY CAST
AS A TRUMPIAN
VILLAIN, LOUIS DEJOY
IS DELIVERING FOR
THE POSTAL SERVICE,
AND DEMOCRATS

BY ERIC CORTELLESSA





*DeJoy with a
package sorter at a
new Postal Service
processing center
in Atlanta*

LOUIS DEJOY THOUGHT his workday was done as he arrived home one evening in February 2022. The Postmaster General was locked in a grueling, monthslong battle with Congress over a bill to shake up the Postal Service. But as he settled in, his cell phone rang and, pulling it out, he saw who was calling and could already guess why. It was Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer. The second most powerful Democrat in America wanted to know how the whip count was coming.

As it happened, the count was coming along very nicely. DeJoy may be best known as the Trump-era GOP megadonor the left accused of meddling with mail-in voting to subvert the 2020 election. But by the time Schumer called him on that frigid winter night, DeJoy was on his way to persuading congressional Republicans—120 in the House and 29 in the Senate—to buy into a lengthy Democratic wish list of postal reforms. When President Joe Biden signed the landmark legislation into law two months later, it guaranteed a union-friendly version of six-day mail service and stabilized health coverage for the 650,000 USPS employees. “There’s no way we could have gotten [the] votes without Louis DeJoy,” says Jim Sauber, the chief of staff for the National Association of Letter Carriers at the time. “That’s for sure.”

The notion that DeJoy, 65, would help advance a key Democratic agenda item would have seemed unfathomable a few years ago. But to the astonishment of many in Washington, the man Democrats once denounced as a threat to American democracy has become one of their most important allies in government. Defying the far right, he delivered more than 500 million COVID-19 test kits to Americans in the winter of 2022. Crossing conservatives last December, he agreed to transition the Postal Service’s entire fleet to electric vehicles by 2026. DeJoy’s capstone collaboration with Democrats was the Postal Service Reform Act, which is arguably the most bipartisan piece of major legislation in the Biden era, drawing more than twice as many

GOP Senate votes as the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill.

DeJoy may be the only person on earth who could have delivered these wins for America’s beloved, beleaguered agency. That’s partly because of the perverse credibility his association with former President Donald Trump and the scandalous 2020 headlines give him with Republicans. It’s also his stubborn insistence that he wasn’t going to allow allegations levied against him in the thick of an inflammatory political season to define him.

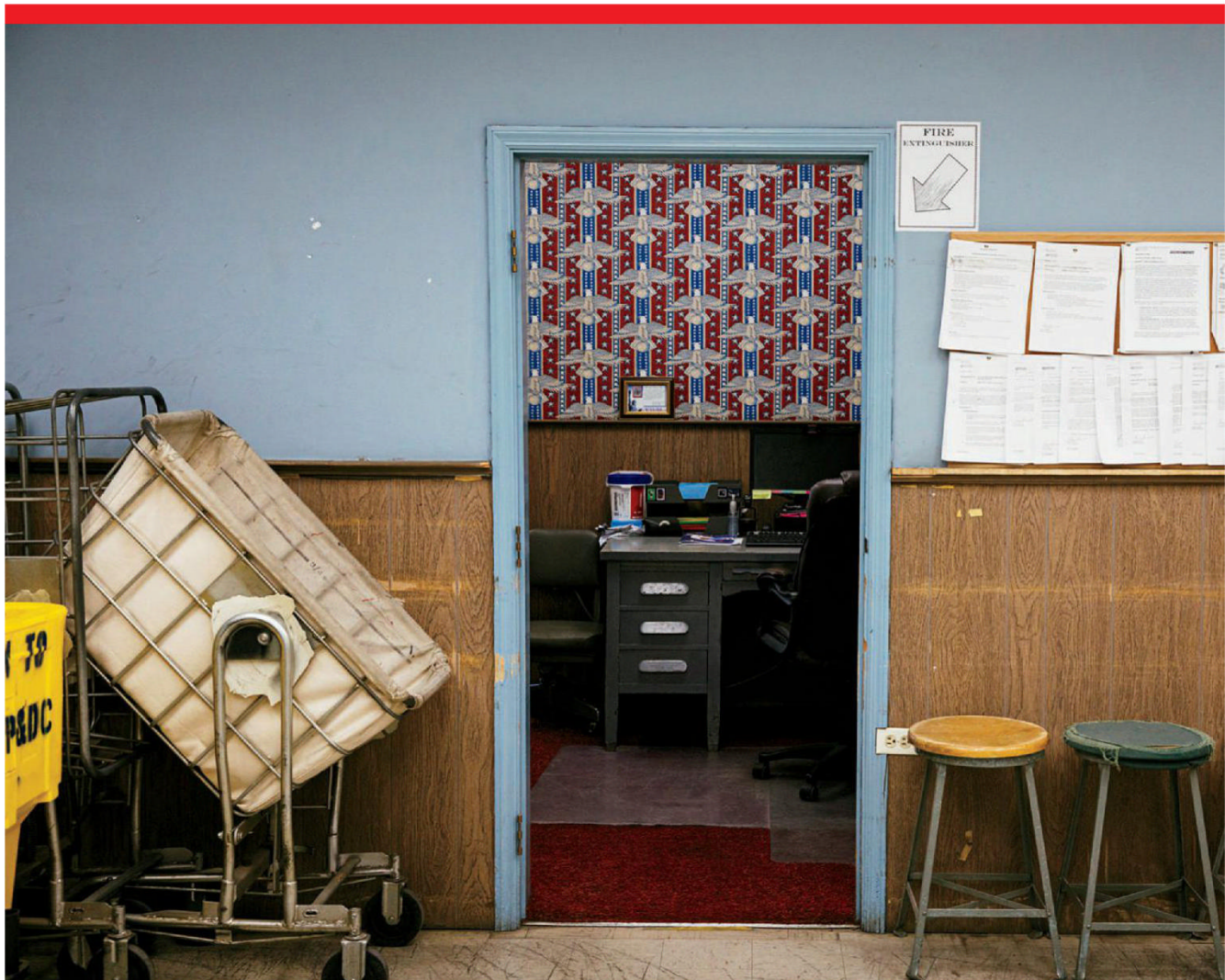
Sitting at a long oak table above a 4,000-sq.-ft. Postal Service processing center outside Atlanta in February, DeJoy, sporting a tailored blue suit and a shiny silver Rolex, ticks off in his heavy Brooklyn accent the details of his demonization: ad hominem attacks in the media, congressional scrutiny, lawsuits, federal investigations. Even his children needed a security detail while they were off at college. It was hell, he says, but not enough to make him quit. “I would not want to live the rest of my life if I walked away because of this bullsh-t,” he says. “It’s that simple.”

He had other reasons for staying too. His Nixon-to-China-like efforts on the postal-reform bill helped DeJoy secure a broad mandate to transform

the agency. Drawing on his decades as a business executive, when he built and sold a logistics firm worth north of \$600 million, DeJoy is enacting a 10-year plan—apart from the reforms—that aims to remake a delivery service that deals increasingly less with traditional mail and more with packages.

The plan grows the agency, building new processing centers and centralizing the delivery network. It converts more than 100,000 part-time employees to full-time. And it adds new services, such as partnerships with local retailers to help them compete with Amazon. These potentially dramatic changes are a chief reason why the postal unions have embraced the self-made man who shares some of their blue collar roots.

Still, it won’t be easy. DeJoy is a prickly but flexible businessman who has at times struggled to adapt to operating within the constraints of a government bureaucracy. When he ordered postal trucks to “run on time” in early July 2020, he set off a chain of events that led to a slowdown of mail delivery for weeks as trucks left their depots without any mail. The misstep helped fuel reports of attempts to undermine the 2020 election, reports that proved to be erroneous but continue to fuel distrust of him among progressives.



A post office in Comer, Ga., that DeJoy intends to upgrade



A new Postal Service processing facility in Palmetto, Ga.

While the unions and the Biden-appointed Democratic majority on the USPS Board of Governors have bought into his plan, there remains fierce resistance in Congress, largely because it raises rates and relies more on trucks than planes to move mail, thereby slowing down the delivery of some first-class mail. He has faced multiple ethics probes, all of which appear to have been dropped. And there are plenty of Republicans who still would like to see the post office die through privatization.

That remains a real possibility. When DeJoy started, the USPS was months away from running out of money. His mission, he says, is to make the Postal Service not only more efficient but eventually profitable (something it hasn't been since 2006) and to beat out FedEx and UPS, private delivery firms that pose an existential threat. Says DeJoy: "That's what I'm trying to do: to set the organization up to compete." He has a personal stake in the effort. "He is fighting for redemption,"

**'He is
fighting for
redemption.'**

—RON BLOOM

says Ron Bloom, a former Democratic member of the USPS Board of Governors. "That's what he wants you to write whenever he rides off into the sunset—that he executed the greatest corporate turnaround in history."

EXHIBIT A IN DEJOY'S EFFORT is the USPS regional processing center in Atlanta, and as he walked through it in early February, he was eager to talk it up. The plant is replete with new equipment. Nowhere can you escape the hum of construction. Crews are installing charging stations for the soon-to-come electric vehicles. Postal workers keep approaching him. It's a far cry from where things were when he started. "I used to walk into a plant and, like, one or two of them would walk over," he says. "They would ask, 'Hey, how's my buddy?'" They were talking about Trump. "I was like, 'I don't know! I don't talk to him!'"

DeJoy grew up in working-class Brooklyn, the son of second-generation Italian immigrants and the oldest of five children. DeJoy's father was frequently absent, he says, because he was on the road as a self-employed truck driver. By high school, DeJoy craved a different lifestyle. "I was interested in money," he says, with a smirk on his face. He was also desperate to escape. So he enrolled

in Stetson University, in Florida, where he earned a degree in accounting. After graduating and spending a few years in Fort Lauderdale as a CPA, he was beckoned home. His father had been assaulted on the job and nearly killed. "It was New York. It was the trucking business," DeJoy says in a matter-of-fact tone. "He got beat up."

While his father convalesced, DeJoy took control of the family business, changing the schedules, cutting expenses, adding new routes. The few years he planned to spend rehabilitating the company became a few decades, and New Breed Logistics grew from 10 employees to 10,000. In the 1990s, he relocated the headquarters to Greensboro, N.C., where his clients included Boeing, Disney, Verizon, the Department of Defense, and the Postal Service itself. In 2014, he sold the firm for \$615 million.

As he built his fortune, DeJoy became a major player in GOP politics. In 2000, he held fundraisers for George W. Bush. After Bush won, the President appointed DeJoy's wife Aldona Wos as U.S. ambassador to Estonia. In the years to come, their North Carolina mansion became a required visit for every serious Republican hopeful, including Trump, who as President offered

DeJoy an ambassadorship. DeJoy turned it down. “I wanted something I could fix,” he says.

DEJOY REMAINED on the board of another logistics firm and ran a real estate investment shop. But then, in January 2020, he got a call from a USPS recruiter. They wanted to talk to him about becoming Postmaster General. Roman Martinez, a Trump-appointed member of the USPS Board of Governors who helped lead the search, says DeJoy beat out hundreds of others because of his logistics expertise, but faced potential Democratic opposition in the byzantine process required to get the job. “We knew he would have a bull’s-eye on his back because of his Republican connections,” Martinez says. “But we felt that what he brought to the table was worth that risk, because he was the kind of guy who could shake the place up. And the place needed shaking up.”

If DeJoy wanted a fix-it project, he was getting one. In April 2020, his predecessor warned that the agency was at risk of financial insolvency by the fall. When DeJoy took the helm on June 16, with the pandemic raging and demand for mail-in voting surging countrywide, it wasn’t clear the agency would be able to deliver last-minute absentee ballots in time. Trump, who despised mail-in voting, made matters worse by trashing the USPS and refusing to sign the first COVID-19 relief bill until Congress removed increased funding for the agency.

A month into the job, DeJoy made a consequential snap decision. He had learned that mail trucks were routinely leaving behind schedule, as drivers would wait for more mail to come in. Even then, they were less than half full. DeJoy told his deputies to “run the trucks on time.” The decision was made in a style that even DeJoy’s defenders characterize as more befitting a corporate executive than a high-level bureaucrat. At first, it seemed to be going swimmingly. “I’m getting reports saying the trucks are running on time,” DeJoy recalls as he pumps his fists in the air and laughs. “Look at this—we’re doing great!” There was one problem. “Nobody’s telling me we’re not putting the mail on the trucks!”

The snafu led to major slowdowns in



DeJoy surveys construction at the Atlanta processing center

mail service, causing a national panic. Americans were relying more on the post office amid the pandemic, and within months millions of voters were expected to vote by mail. The problem was resolved a few weeks later—DeJoy set up a new team to monitor operations and troubleshoot any lingering issues—but the debacle helped fuel an emerging narrative that DeJoy, a major Trump donor, was out to sabotage the election.

DeJoy’s antagonists also started spreading allegations that he was whisking away sorting machines and iconic blue mailboxes to subvert the vote. In fact the USPS had been cutting back the boxes for decades because of the declining use of first-class mail, and the sorting machines were obsolete and had been sitting under tarps, according to Amber McReynolds, a Biden appointee on the Board of Governors. McReynolds was, at the time, working closely with the Postal Service as CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute, and has emerged as a DeJoy defender. “I tried to correct disinformation as much as I could,” she says. DeJoy was also falsely

accused in the press and by some in Congress of eliminating overtime for postal workers. Union leaders insist otherwise. “Believe me, if they cut off overtime, our members would tell us,” says Sauber, the former senior postal union official.

With Trump openly undermining the vote, Democrats were nevertheless convinced that DeJoy was scheming to hamper Democratic turnout. “It was a deliberate and malign effort to disrupt that election in favor of Trump,” says Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia. In August, state attorneys general and activist groups filed lawsuits accusing DeJoy of trying to disenfranchise voters. Speaker Nancy Pelosi interrupted the House’s summer recess to vote to revoke any USPS policy changes until after the pandemic.

Amid the uproar, DeJoy announced he was suspending those measures “to avoid even the appearance” of impacting the election. When he testified before Congress, his image as a Trumpian villain only grew. One Democratic lawmaker asked him, “Is your backup plan



to be pardoned like Roger Stone?” DeJoy, defensive and combative, didn’t win over any adversaries. By September, a federal judge had said he tried to tamper with the vote.

Ultimately, voting by mail was a resounding success. DeJoy embraced a union idea to expedite mail ballot delivery and set up a panel to monitor election mail. As a record 43% of Americans voted by mail, the USPS handled more than 135 million mail ballots. Roughly 94% were processed on time, and 99% made it to election boards within a week. “We had the best delivery rates on election mail that we’ve ever had,” says McReynolds.

AT THE START of the Biden Administration, many assumed DeJoy’s days as Postmaster General were numbered. Others had different ideas. “With all the outcry and all the Trump this and Trump that,” says Fred Rolando, then the president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, “I just saw opportunity.” Rolando and a group of union heads and key Democrats

believed DeJoy’s standing with the GOP could be the ticket to passing postal reform, which a small bipartisan group of lawmakers had been pushing for years.

Then Representative Carolyn Maloney, the chair of the House Oversight Committee at the time, brokered a compromise with Representative James Comer, the Kentucky Republican, union leaders, and DeJoy. The main priority, they all agreed, was repealing a George W. Bush-era mandate that required the Postal Service to prepay health plans for retirees, an onerous requirement imposed on no other federal agency. By ending the prefunding requirement the agency would be free of \$58 billion of liabilities.

Many GOP lawmakers reflexively saw the proposal as a bailout, but DeJoy was uniquely positioned to convince them otherwise. “The key to getting Republicans’ support, for me, was to prove to Republicans that we had the right person in place to make the reforms,” says Comer. “You can’t reform a government agency with a career bureaucrat.” It wasn’t easy on the other side of the aisle, either. Maloney took considerable heat from her own party for working with DeJoy. “I used to tell them: Do you want to fire him, or do you want postal reform?” she says.

DeJoy’s lobbying effort reached a peak in February 2022, when Comer brought him to Capitol Hill to address the entire GOP caucus. “There were a lot of undecideds,” Comer recalls. “Once they listened to him talk from a business standpoint, and how he was specifically going to cut losses at the Postal Service without harming performance, I think they were sold.” The next day, the legislation passed the House with 342 votes.

In the Senate, DeJoy kept in regular touch with Schumer and the bill’s two co-sponsors, Democrat Gary Peters of Michigan and Republican Rob Portman of Ohio. Bloom, a former USPS Board of Governors member, remembers Peters telling him, “I can’t get the Republican votes without DeJoy.” It passed the 50-50 Senate with 79 votes.

DeJoy’s pivotal role in breaking a 20-year logjam didn’t earn him an embrace from Biden. The White House didn’t invite him to the bill-signing ceremony until the night before. The event itself

would leave the public with no clue that the Postmaster had anything to do with the bill: DeJoy wasn’t mentioned in the President’s remarks, and wasn’t onstage for the signing. He was sitting in the back of the room.

But DeJoy is not one for hard feelings. Six months later, after Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act allocating \$3 billion to help the Postal Service go electric, he reached out to John Podesta, Biden’s climate adviser. By Christmas 2022, they announced a plan for the USPS to fully electrify in four years. “Given the earlier track record, I didn’t know what to expect,” says Podesta. “We ended up, I think, respecting one another. He walked into an institution that had a lot of issues, but I think he has tackled them in a way that’s brought over his skeptics—of which I probably counted myself among them.”

There have been other victories and vindications. Last winter, he worked with the White House to deliver half a million COVID-19 test kits to Americans across the country; roughly 60% of the orders were fulfilled within 24 hours, 90% within 48 hours. And there’s no longer an ethical cloud hanging over his head. Both the Federal Election Commission and the FBI closed investigations into him related to campaign contributions, and the USPS Inspector General said he met “all applicable ethics requirements related to disclosure, recusal, and divestment” pertaining to his holdings with Postal Service contractors upon taking the job.

All the while, DeJoy’s 10-year plan to save the USPS is in motion. The new million-sq.-ft. regional processing plant near Atlanta, set to open next year, is one of 60 such facilities he aims to launch. How long DeJoy will be there to oversee the plan is another matter. His tenure as Postmaster General is up to the board—and him.

DeJoy has his own metrics for success: saving the USPS may be the only way to transcend his 2020 infamy. “I hope all this stupid nonsense stuff is not on my obituary,” he says. In the next two or three years, he says, the USPS may be transformed enough for him to move on. After that? “I don’t know if it’s my last rodeo,” says DeJoy. “I feel pretty young. I got other things to do.” □



TIME



W O R L D ' S
Greatest
P L A C E S

The travel industry is back in full swing in 2023, but not without notable shifts in how and where we wander. Steeper costs and increased interest in sustainability and authenticity are reshaping the landscape. Explore these 15 and 35 more of the most exciting spots at time.com/worldsgreatestplaces

▲
*Wild yaks traverse
the rugged landscape
of Ladakh, India*

PHOTOGRAPH BY NABARUN BHATTACHARYA



Tuamotu Archipelago, French Polynesia

Preserving paradise

As French Polynesia moves toward more sustainable tourism—a new five-year plan calls for one foreign visitor per local resident—visiting the remote Tuamotu Archipelago is one way to put your dollars more directly into the pockets

of locals. Known for black-pearl farming, the Tuamotus sprawl over 76 islands and atolls across 700,000 sq. mi. of the South Pacific, and are just an hour's fly time from the capital of Papeete.

The Tuamotus are also known for world-class surfing, scuba diving, and snorkeling, with plunging coral walls and current-washed passes filled with reef sharks

on atolls like Fakarava and Rangiroa (the latter is the second largest atoll in the world and could fit the entire main island of Tahiti within its enormous lagoon).

Get off the grid at family-owned-and-operated spots like Cocoperle Lodge on Ahe, Les Relais de Joséphine on Rangiroa, and Le Relais Royal Tikehau, where you can go fishing with local fishermen.

In December, Delta launched a nonstop flight from Los Angeles to Papeete on Tahiti, and in February, Air Moana launched interisland flights from Papeete to Rangiroa to compete with Air Tahiti's historically pricey fares.

You can tour the Tuamotus on wind power too, with catamaran sailing adventures for up to 12 people with Herevai Charter. —*Terry Ward*



▼
Tourists
paddleboard
past sharks
off Tuamotu
Archipelago



PREVIOUS PAGES: GETTY IMAGES; THESE PAGES: FRENCH POLYNESIA: TAHITI TOURISME; INDIA: GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALWAYSWITHHONOR FOR TIME



Ladakh, India

Adventures and eats

With its astonishing alpine landscapes and Tibetan Buddhist culture, Ladakh—in the farthest-flung part of North India—has enough wonders to warrant multiple visits.

In 2023, India designated its first dark sky reserve, in Hanle village, about 168 miles southeast of Leh, Ladakh's capital. The village has roughly 270 clear nights a year, making it ideal for astronomical splendor. The reserve spans 414 sq. mi. and envelops much of the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary.

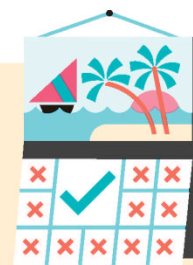
The launch of a new helicopter service in summer 2022 has reduced the travel time between major destinations in Ladakh—including Leh, Zaskar,

Kargil, and Drass—from five to 12 hours by car to just 45 minutes.

In Leh, visit legendary Delhi eateries Karim's, known for its Mughlai menu of grilled meats, and Nathu's Sweets, which both opened outlets in 2022. Cafe Montagne, also new last year, offers tempura fried prawns with sea buckthorn, fondue, and spicy fried chicken. For those heading to Turtuk Village, about a five-hour drive from Leh, don't miss the Farmer's House Cafe, another new eatery. Try the sushi, Himalayan herb salad with local cheese, or hand-rolled pasta with walnut sauce.

Bookend your adventures with a stay in one of the region's new sustainable properties: Dolkhar in Leh, the Kyagar Hotel in Nubra Valley, and Shel Ladakh, a 30-minute drive from Leh airport.

—Poonam Binayak



FIND THE BEST FARE

Air travel is on track to return to prepandemic levels, which, along with staff shortages and high fuel costs, in January had pushed U.S. domestic flight fares up more than 25% over a year ago, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But there are still ways to save.

If you travel frequently, book with the same airline as much as possible. "Loyalty is key," says supertraveler Jessica Nabongo, who saved over \$4,000 in luggage fees last year by sticking with Delta.

Hayley Berg, lead economist at travel site Hopper, advises domestic travelers to monitor prices three to four months in advance and book one to two months out for the lowest price.

Experts say that websites like TheFlightDeal.com, AirfareSpot.com, and SecretFlying.com offer the best deals.

If your priority is just to travel, Nabongo says, "you should chase the deal and not the destination." By letting flight prices dictate where she went, Nabongo was able to see over 195 countries by the age of 35.

—Mariah Espada

Dakar, Senegal

Fashion hot spot

Senegal bursts with color, from the bubble-gum pink algae that dye Lake Retba to the blue and yellow mini-buses, *car rapides*, that navigate Dakar's stylish streetscapes. So it's no wonder Africa's westernmost capital city is also a blossoming fashion capital. Arrive on Delta's direct route from New York City, then weave your way through the fabric of a city defined by its modern architecture and contemporary craftspeople.

It's already old news that Chanel hosted its first runway show in Africa last December at the picturesque former Palais de Justice.

In fact: Chanel never left. In January, the French luxury house opened a new exhibition space, le19M Dakar, within the Theodore Monod African Art Museum. The free gallery offers local artisans the opportunity to dye and weave new works on-site to display alongside the museum's permanent collection. The gift shop is curated by one of the city's most influential entrepreneurs, L'Artisane designer Khadija Ba, who's also behind the nearby concept shop Le Sandaga—a homage to the city's famed Sandaga Market. L'Artisane is part of a new wave of Dakar womens-wear labels getting worldwide acclaim (and dressing

celebrities—Naomi Campbell is a fan). If there's not enough room in your suitcase, pick up a steamer trunk and make the voyage home aboard one of Viking's transatlantic cruises.

Chic travelers can stay at the waterfront Radisson Blu Dakar Sea Plaza, located in the Fann district on the Cape Verde Peninsula. And before you go, catch a glimpse of Black Rock Senegal, founded by Kehinde Wiley, the artist behind Barack Obama's presidential portrait. Wiley's waterfront home hosts public talks and screenings by artists in residence, like the recently Oscar-nominated filmmaker Sophia Nahli Allison.

—Adam Robb

▼
Models walk an outdoor runway at the 2020 Dakar Fashion Week



Luang Prabang, Laos

A hidden paradise

Turquoise waterfalls, Buddhist temples, and sunset boat trips on the Mekong are just a few of Luang Prabang's highlights. Despite its remote location in the jungled mountains of Laos, the former royal capital is not just for backpackers.

After a two-year border closure, a new \$6 billion high-speed railway from China to Thailand now runs from the Chinese city of Kunming to the Laotian capital, Vientiane. The train turns the once 12-hour bus ride from Vientiane to Luang Prabang into a scenic two-hour trip.

The town boasts luxurious boutique hotels; some, like Amantaka and Sofitel Luang Prabang, are housed in historic French colonial buildings. At Tamarind Cooking School, discover why Gordon Ramsay named Laos one of the top food destinations in the world. (After mastering sticky rice, learn to grow it at the Living Land Farm.) Then visit the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center, a museum dedicated to the country's 50 ethnic groups and 160 ethnic subgroups, and tour the Free the Bears wildlife sanctuary, a haven to over 100 moon and sun bears rescued from poaching. —Cindy Fan

SENEGAL: FINBARR O'REILLY; LAOS: SERGI REBOREDO—VMPICS/REDUX; SPAIN: YUNAY/SHUTTERSTOCK



Barcelona, Spain

Art-history haven

▲
*The Sagrada
Família Basilica,
a work in progress
since 1882*

Historic Barcelona is in top form this year. Antoni Gaudí's architectural marvel, the unfinished Sagrada Família, recently completed the towers of the evangelists Luke and Mark, which join the Virgin Mary's tower, completed in 2021. In late 2023, the towers of the evangelists John and Matthew will join

the other pinnacles in lighting up the city during the Christmas season. For panoramic views of the city, visitors can climb the Apostle towers of either the Nativity or Passion facades. By 2026—the 100th anniversary of Gaudí's death—the 566-ft.-tall Jesus Christ tower is expected to debut and complete the set of six.

Beyond the much-anticipated Sagrada Família's unveilings,

2023 marks the 50th anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death, and with it, events and exhibitions, including parallel exhibits (Museu Picasso and Fundació Joan Miró) spotlighting the painter's lifelong friendship with fellow artist Joan Miró.

The city's leading classical-music concert venues—the 176-year-old Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Palau de la Música Catalana, and L'Auditori, designed by

a Pritzker Prize winner—will collaborate via the Barcelona Obertura initiative to promote Barcelona as a pre-eminent city for classical-music performances.

Visitors can stay at Casa Sagnier, the former home of architect Enric Sagnier, or Antiga Casa Buenavista, a family restaurant since 1918, both of which have relaunched as boutique hotels.

—Jessica Benavides
Canepa



As Airbnb prices rise, hotels are having a renaissance

Here's how to book smarter

BY ARMANI SYED

IN THE 15 YEARS SINCE ITS INCEPTION, Airbnb has become the travel industry's bread and butter. But once regarded as the affordable option, Airbnb prices began creeping up as the platform became more popular. Airbnb's average global price rose from \$110 per night in 2020 to \$137 in 2021, according to All The Rooms, which catalogs vacation-rental properties. In February, Airbnb cited its average daily rate (ADR) as \$153 for the last quarter of 2022. Meanwhile, in the fourth quarter of 2022, Hilton reported an ADR of \$151.81, and InterContinental Hotel Group reported \$125.58. While costs are up across the board, the gap between hotels and Airbnb is closing.

A spokesperson for Airbnb says that "Airbnb often provides more space and more amenities" and that its prices remain below those of some major hotel chains. But for travelers looking for one or two nights away, Airbnb's narrowing price advantage, plus the lack of certain hotel luxuries like reception and regular cleaning, are drawbacks.

As hotels begin to offer better deals than independent rentals, here's how to find a great place to stay that doesn't dent the pocketbook too much.

► Time your booking strategically

You can find bargains by waiting for last-minute deals. "If you're willing to gamble and have some flexibility on location or room type, [by] waiting closer until your arrival, you can unlock savings when hotels are looking to fill rooms at the last minute," advises a spokesperson for Hotels.com.

You can also get further discounts by opting for midweek stays or off-season dates, which will also allow you to avoid the crowds. Average hotel rates tend to be lower in April and May or September and October, just before and after the peak summer months.

► Use travel community pages to your advantage

Community platforms like Trippin can help you find hidden gems at your destination that may not be in the guidebooks. The website can help you discover less touristy parts of a city, as recommended by locals. Hotels in these areas are often less trafficked and have lower rates. It also offers travel tools to help people plan trips that are more ethical, environmentally conscious, LGBTQ friendly, and more diverse.

► Join hotel rewards programs or members sites

Booking as part of rewards and loyalty programs can unlock deals for boutique and luxury hotels that aren't available to the general public, and help you pull off requests for upgrades upon arrival. Free members-only sites such as Secret Escapes and Travelzoo offer generous discounts on anonymous hotels for customers to claim during a short window of time.

► Use price-comparison websites or go direct

According to MoneySavingExpert.com, bargain hunters can use price-comparison sites to find a room rate, and then call the hotel directly to see if they can give you a better rate or throw in any additional freebies to sweeten the deal. (Check rates on the hotel's website to give you an idea of how much to haggle.)

► Book hotels with free cancellation

This will allow you to cancel and rebook your stay if a deal becomes active closer to your trip. It also lets you shop for a last-minute deal elsewhere, assured you have a backup option in place.

▲
The Belgadia
Palace hotel in
Mayurbhanj,
India



Aarhus, Denmark

The sea and the stars

▲
*The Ole Romer
Observatory
Science Park
in Aarhus*

Design-driven Aarhus has long embraced the sea, and this year even more so. In early summer, the city's harbor will transform into a maritime celebration as a host of the Ocean Race, one of the longest round-the-world sailing challenges, with in-port races and other events.

Aarhus' cuisine abounds with innovative seafood, including at the Michelin-starred Substans, where you can dine on lobster from the Bay of Aarhus while gazing at it. At Frederikshøj, awarded a second Michelin star in 2022, the playful cuisine might include truffles from Marselisborg Forest or oysters from Veno island.

The ocean also frames the city's cutting-edge

architecture, including Dokk1, one of the largest libraries in Scandinavia, and the Bjarke Ingels-designed harbor bath, where you can splash in floating seawater pools. Explore the history of Aarhus' seafaring founders—the Vikings—at the Moesgaard Museum, an architectural marvel with a grass roof.

Lift your gaze to the Nordic skies at the newly

reopening, beautifully restored, 112-year-old Ole Romer Observatory, or at the AROs art museum, which is crowned with a rainbow walkway by artist Olafur Eliasson.

Then rise above the center of Aarhus at the Salling department store, which last year unveiled a magical urban garden on its rooftop terrace, with sweeping city views.

—AnneLise Sorensen



Musanze, Rwanda

Trek with gorillas

Musanze is the largest city in northern Rwanda and the gateway to Volcanoes National Park—home of rare mountain gorillas—which recently announced its expansion from 62 to 76 sq. mi. by 2027, an endeavor that will reduce human-

wildlife conflict by 80%. A limited number of \$1,500 daily gorilla-trek entry fees enable farmers and reformed gorilla poachers to make a living while not encroaching on the animals' habitats. The opening of the Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and its Gorilla Doctors campus, which invest in the conservation and

research of endangered mountain gorillas, have brought global attention to the area.

Red Rocks Rwanda, an amenity-rich nonprofit hostel, strives to connect locals and visitors through storytelling, banana-beer making, and Rwandan dance. Private homestays, many of which include cooking lessons and pottery-

making workshops, are arranged by the community-led nonprofit Gorilla Guardians. And Musanze-based tour operator Beyond the Gorillas Experience brings a break from all things gorilla with guided cycling and treks through Volcanoes Park. Round out the trip with a stop at the Inshuti Art Gallery.

—Sucheta Rawal



▼
The gorilla naming ceremony grounds in Volcanoes National Park



RWANDA: EDWIN REMSBERG—VMPICS/REDUX; THAILAND: COURTESY CARNIVAL MAGIC



Phuket, Thailand

Family thrills

▲
The Kingdom of Lights at Phuket's electrifying Carnival Magic theme park

Thailand's most visited region—the famed beaches of Phuket—just upped its family appeal with the grand opening of Carnival Magic in September. The country's first culturally focused theme park, 40 acres sandwiched between verdant mountain and sandy shore, re-creates traditional festivals and market fairs found throughout the kingdom in a dazzling array of neon lights.

Kids can get their

ice cream fix at Torry's, a family-run shop in the heart of Phuket town that uses ingredients like coconut milk and blue pea flower in the subtly sweet and umami-rich Bi Co Moi.

Volun-tourism initiatives continue to be a priority on the island. The Phuket Elephant Sanctuary, for example, invites visitors to help feed the animals and provides education about elephant communication and behavior.

Although the island is best known for its eponymous city, Phuket is drawing more

visitors to its uncrowded countryside with an impressive landscape of modern luxury lodges. The new five-star Noku Hotel overlooking Chalong Bay, designed to blend in with the environs, was recently awarded the Green Mark Gold award for sustainability. On the opposite end of the bay, the ultra-luxe V Villas (opened in 2021) is a collection of 19 stand-alone suites on a private hillside. And the beach bungalows of Selina Serenity Rawai Phuket provide a lower-priced option.

—Brad Japhe



TAMING THE AIRPORT

It's possible to make the airport less stressful. Samantha and Ryan Looney, travel bloggers at @samandryanlooney, recommend being proactive. "I pack a change of clothes, toothbrush, [and other] essentials in my carry-on even if I'm checking a bag," says Samantha. Eileen Rhein, who blogs as @lighttravelsfaster, also recommends putting a GPS tracker like an Apple AirTag in your bag and getting a TSA-approved lock on suitcases in case they go missing.

Of the services that can expedite lines, "I would do Global Entry if you're eligible," says Gary Leff, who writes for View From the Wing. "If you are a frequent traveler, then Global Entry and CLEAR can be worthwhile together, because PreCheck lines can get long."

All of them say lounges, which provide food, are worth it; some credit cards offer access as a perk. Travel consultant Martinique Lewis recommends Priority Pass, which provides access to a network of lounges and restaurants around the world for an annual fee. —Simone Shah

Churchill, Manitoba

Northern wonders

On average, Churchill sees auroral activity about 10 months per year

If you've always dreamed of seeing the aurora borealis, you're in luck this year, as solar activity heads toward a peak in its roughly 11-year cycle. One of the best spots to catch the northern lights is this remote Hudson Bay outpost, which sits just below the "auroral oval," meaning the sky often dances to life more than 300 nights a year. Winter aurora-hunting has opened up a whole new tourist season in a town that has traditionally attracted the vast majority of its visitors during the fall polar bear migration. The massive carnivores remain big business, of course, and to get travelers (safely) up close to

them, Frontiers North Adventures recently unveiled its electric Tundra Buggy, a behemoth with 6-ft. tires that cruises over the ice at barely a whisper.

Polar bears aren't the only big white animals in Churchill: thousands of belugas enter these waters in the summer, and tour companies are finding new ways to introduce travelers to the famously vocal "canaries of the sea." Frontiers North partnered with marine biologist Valeria Vergara, who studies "language" acquisition in baby belugas (aww!), on its new Conservation Journey itinerary, while Lazy Bear Expeditions is set to unveil its newest catamaran, the *Matonabee*, featuring 12 underwater windows for getting face-to-melon-head with the inquisitive cetaceans.

—Nicholas DeRenzo



Dijon, France

Gourmet haven

Dijon has long been one of France's great gastronomic cities. While almost all its namesake mustard is now manufactured outside the city, globetrotting gastronomes still frequent Dijon's Michelin-rated restaurants, such as William Frachot and CIBO, and the famous food market, Les Halles Gourmandes.

In 2022, Dijon rose to further prominence with the launch of its Cité de la Gastronomie et du Vin. Inside the former Hôtel-Dieu—the city's historic hospital—visitors enjoy the region's food and wine through tastings and courses at Ferrandi Paris school of culinary arts and École des Vins de Bourgogne, among other eateries. A pedestrian wine trail links the complex to the railway station.

This milestone opening follows the launch of France's Vallée de la Gastronomie trail, from Dijon to Marseilles, highlighting local producers of wine, beer, truffles, olives, cheese, and sweets along the way. New hotel openings—Sainte-Anne Hotel Dijon, a Hilton Curio Collection property, and Mama Shelter Dijon (opening this summer)—offer restful bases for expeditions.

—Lauren Jade Hill



Giza and Saqqara, Egypt

Back to the pyramids

▲
The Grand Egyptian Museum is near the pyramids of Giza

After years of delay, the new Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Giza is finally open. A 3,200-year-old, 36-ft.-tall colossus of Ramesses the Great towers beneath the skylights in GEM's immense angular atrium. Flights to the new Sphinx International Airport, 40 minutes from GEM, began in November;

the museum is initially open for a "trial special operations period," but all 12 exhibition halls will fully open later in 2023. The 5.2 million-sq.-ft. museum on the outskirts of Cairo has views of the Great Pyramid a mile away. GEM houses 100,000 artifacts, many moved from the jam-packed, century-old museum

on Tahrir Square, with some never before seen by the public. Two of GEM's exhibition halls hold almost every one of King Tut's 5,000 treasures, unearthed 100 years ago.

More recently found artifacts are in GEM, too, including antiquities from 14 miles south in Saqqara like the 52-ft.-long Waziri Papyrus, the first scroll discovery credited to an Egyptian. Tourist buses pass by Saqqara's active excavation

sites—megatombs of animal and human mummies—when they visit the 4,700-year-old Step Pyramid of Djoser, called the oldest pyramid, which was recently reopened after extensive restoration.

Choose your Egypt tour carefully: all visit Giza, but few stop in Saqqara. Trafalgar and Viking do, and Viking launches its new Nile ship, *Viking Aton*, in August 2023.

—Johanna Read

Torres del Paine National Park, Chile

Puma safari

Known as a hikers' paradise, with famous multiday routes including the W Circuit and the O Circuit, the Torres del Paine region of Southern Chile is also one of the best places on earth to see wild pumas right now. Thanks to a growing population and a high level of habituation to humans, visitors have a good chance of spotting the elusive animals inside Torres del Paine National Park (the second most popular park in the country with more than 300,000 visitors per year) or on privately owned ranchland surrounding the park. And it's about to get even easier. Awasi Patagonia has restarted its puma-conservation program by leasing land surrounding the lodge—

which is located on the outskirts of the national park—removing the livestock, and banning puma hunting. (Killing pumas is illegal in Chile, but is still often practiced on private land outside the national park, so this program will expand the safe corridor for big cats that routinely roam outside park boundaries.)

Starting in 2023, Awasi will offer guests exclusive puma-sighting excursions led by experienced trackers directly from the lodge. Guests can check camera traps, learn about conservation, and, of course, look for pumas. Also in 2023, Quasar Expeditions will be adding a new lodging option and new activities to the company's multiday Patagonia Untamed Puma Safari tours in the Torres del Paine area.

—Karen Catchpole

▼ A trekker near the mountains of Torres del Paine National Park



Budapest, Hungary

Making history

This year marks 150 years since three cities along the Danube—Buda, Obuda, and Pest—united, forming the modern metropolis of Budapest. The Hungarian capital is celebrating its sesquicentennial with nearly 100 events extending through 2024.

The city's landmark Chain Bridge will reopen to pedestrians this fall after more than two years of reconstruction. In October, scores of spectators will cheer on participants in the Budapest Marathon as they run next to and under the famous bridge.

▲ Visitors relax beside Budapest's Chain Bridge



Other anniversary events include an open-air jubilee concert in Heroes' Square in September; the Cake of Budapest competition, whose winning confectionary is set to be offered citywide after the first public tasting this fall; and a new exhibit on the identity of Budapest at the Budapest History Museum.

The events build on the momentum of several recent openings, including the Museum of Ethnography, House of Music Hungary, and the Hungarian State Opera, which wrapped up a comprehensive renovation last year. Many attractions at the

Buda Castle Palace District, including St. Stephen's Hall, the Guardhouse, and Karakash Pasha Tower, have been restored to their original glory as part of the National Hauszmann Program.

A slate of new hotels will house anniversary visitors. The W Budapest is set to open directly across from the opera house in July. The historic Klotild Palace will be converted into the St. Regis Hotel Budapest. And the Dorothea Hotel, part of Marriott's Autograph Collection, will debut on Vorosmarty Square.

—Joni Sweet

Kangaroo Island, Australia

Rising from the ashes

When bushfires ignited Australia's third largest island during 2019 and 2020, half of Kangaroo Island burned, killing 40% of its namesake marsupials and an estimated 40,000 koalas. Researchers mourned losses among species like the sooty dunnart, a mouse-size marsupial that lives nowhere else on earth.

But visitors to the island will find a landscape lush with greenery, including the Kangaroo Island yucca, whose spiky flowers disappear for decades and bloom only in the wake of fire. Aided by Western River Refuge, even the dunnart is scurrying back. Recovery has been a community-wide effort, travelers included. Guide company Exceptional Kangaroo Island recently introduced three-day private

conservation tours; Seal Bay Conservation Park has new research adventures to assist with monitoring endangered Australian sea lions.

The focus on sustainability extends to the island's sleek new stays. In December, Wander unveiled four solar-powered, rainwater-harvesting luxury cabins at the island's northern cusp. Sun- and rainwater-fueled Sea Dragon Lodge rolls out five new ocean-view suites in March, growing its 250-acre beachfront property. And after burning to the ground, eco-luxury icon Southern Ocean Lodge reopens in November with off-grid guest suites surrounded by fire-resistant native succulents and juniper trees.

—Jen Rose Smith

▼
A koala climbs on Kangaroo Island, three years after devastating fires



RETURN OF THE CRUISE

The COVID-19 pandemic sent the cruise industry into a 15-month shutdown, but now ships are back in business with an anticipated 31.5 million passengers embarking on cruises in 2023, according to the Cruise Lines International Association.

Last summer, the CDC stopped requiring COVID-19 vaccination and testing on all cruise ships, leaving individual lines to determine their own protocols. Cruises are still required to report outbreaks to the CDC, as they do with norovirus, but all major lines have dropped their vaccine requirements, with a few exceptions (such as some Carnival cruises longer than 16 days, and some cruises departing from Australia).

For those still hesitant, Richard Simms, staff writer for Cruise Radio, says many lines, like the Haven from Norwegian, are investing in a "ship within a ship" concept, where travelers can pay a premium for more secluded amenities. "You're removed from the rest of the ship," he says. "You feel an extra bubble of protection."

—Simmone Shah



Aqaba, Jordan

Otherworldly escape

▲
Suites at Memories Aicha Luxury Camp in Aqaba provide surreal accommodations

Set against the rust-colored Wadi Rum mountains, Aqaba is the only coastal city in the country of Jordan, on the northern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The ancient city of Petra—a New Wonder of the World—is just 78 miles away through desert haze. The otherworldly landscape might look familiar to visitors as the planet Arrakis in *Dune*. The sci-fi franchise's second

installment, which premieres this November, was also filmed in the extraordinarily dramatic scenery of the Wadi Rum reserve, referred to as the Valley of the Moon and previously famous as the backdrop for *Lawrence of Arabia*.

But it's not just the dunes that are bringing new visitors to Aqaba this year; it's the sea. In the Gulf of Aqaba, Aqaba Marine Park aims to preserve its marine biosphere, which includes coral reefs and 19 dive

sites, as well as an underwater walking experience or glass-bottom boats for those looking to stay dry.

Jordan's first cruise terminal, inaugurated in January, welcomes an influx of cruisers to Aqaba as well. The Port of Aqaba anticipates a 25% increase in passenger ships for 2023, including an initial visit from luxury

cruise line Windstar. From the megaships of MSC Cruises to superyacht *Emerald Azzurra*, sailing the Middle East demands a port of call at the tip of the Red Sea where four countries meet. For those watching from shore, there's the five-star Al Manara, a Marriott Luxury Collection Hotel.

—Brittany Chrusciel



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Time Off

ALISON ROMAN WON'T SUGAR- COAT IT

BY ELIANA DOCKTERMAN

She cooked her way
through a controversy.
Now she's ready to talk
about it



INSIDE

WILLEM DAFOE ENTHRALLS
IN AN ART-HEIST THRILLER

TV RECKONS WITH
CLIMATE CHANGE

A BELOVED PODCAST
DUO LOOKS BACK

ALISON ROMAN IS COOKING RICE, a grain she dismissed as “filler” in her 2017 cookbook *Dining In*. But she’s preparing a Passover dessert, and leavening agents are verboten. Roman isn’t a chocolate person, so flourless chocolate cake is out. But in 2015, rabbis declared rice kosher for Passover after an 800-year ban. So rice pudding it is.

It’s February, over a month before the Jewish holiday, but Roman needs to get the all-day shoot done for her *Home Movies* YouTube series before she goes on tour for her latest cookbook, *Sweet Enough*, out March 28. Her loftlike Brooklyn apartment with whitewashed brick walls and exposed pipes looks more like a studio than a living space when stuffed with lights and cameras. Pots boil over and dishes pile up, but Roman approaches the chaos with enviable levity, squeezing lemon here and sprinkling red pepper flakes there while declaring to the camera that the word *unctuous* has been banished from her vocabulary for onomatopoeic reasons. Being invited into Roman’s kitchen is like snagging a seat at your foodie friend’s boozy dinner party, a vibe that helped her 2021 “Thanksgiving Special” rack up over 1 million views.

Roman declares that she will diverge from the recipe and chill the rice pudding without plastic wrap so it can form a film. She hates food without texture—she’s anti-avocado and fills her tuna salad with an obscene amount of celery—so she must add crunch to this mushy dessert. Her crew members exchange skeptical looks. But Roman is probably right. She usually is, about food anyway. Her stances—anchovies make everything better; one-use kitchen tools are pointless; crispy potatoes are superior to mashed—might turn off potential fans if her recipes didn’t work so well. But her opinions have also gotten her in trouble. In 2020, she was semicanceled and the *New York Times* suspended her column after she intimated in an interview that Marie Kondo and Chrissy Teigen, women of color in a traditionally white milieu, had sold out by launching lines of home goods—even though Roman herself was working on a line of spoons.

Roman apologized, but she didn’t disappear. A month later, she launched her snarkily named “A Newsletter.” She never returned to the *Times*. Unlike some public figures felled by scandal in the early days of the pandemic, she couldn’t retreat to a compound. “I didn’t have a choice. Not financially, not emotionally, not intellectually. I have to pay rent. I had no fallback,” she says.

Steadily, her popularity grew again. Perhaps Roman has endured because while she apologized, she didn’t go on an apology tour. While she read the comments and engaged in



With her new cookbook, Roman returns to her roots as a pastry chef

conversations about her privilege, she doesn’t present herself as a new person. “I had two choices: I could let it ruin my life or not,” she says. “I’m an authentic person, and what is authentic to me is to cook. So I did. There were a lot of people before who didn’t like me. There are a lot of people now who don’t like me. If you try to trace a trajectory from pre-*that* to post-*that*, it’s the same person with a wonderful dose of evolution.”

Her life has changed in the past three years. On top of the pandemic and publicity woes, she went through a breakup, met someone new, moved, got a new therapist. “There are certain things that can only come from failing in a really epic way in a very public forum,” she says. “You become more nervous and afraid and ashamed. But you also become a little bit more brave.”

ROMAN, 37, DROPPED OUT of college to work as a pastry chef. She baked for six years in her home state, California, and her adopted home, New York. After *Dining In*, her editor urged her to write a book of desserts. Instead she wrote *Nothing Fancy*, a best-selling cookbook that instructs readers how to stage low-maintenance dinner parties: think guests arranging snacks while sipping three-ingredient spritzes. She just prefers savory food. Even in her new book on sweets, she’s included a savory section—and yes, anchovies make an appearance.

Desserts can be scary. It’s harder to make real-time adjustments. You don’t know if a cake tastes terrible until it’s done. But Roman insists many of her dessert recipes are “casual.” The one on the book’s cover, Raspberries and Sour Cream, isn’t even really a recipe. It’s a suggestion that sprinkling sugar on raspberries and mixing them on sour cream will taste delicious. (It does.)

Roman’s recipes are simple. That may seem like an obvious way to achieve popularity, but it’s not every cookbook author’s goal. When Roman left the restaurant world to work at *Bon Appétit*, she tried to impress her bosses with complicated dishes. But readers weren’t making them. “Do I want people to know what a badass cook I am and what skills I possess? Or do I want people to feed themselves?” she asks, looking back.

Roman also learned at *Bon Appétit* that she was telegenic. She is the rare influencer who doesn’t have an on-camera persona and an off-camera one. During the Passover shoot, Roman’s

‘There are certain things that can only come from failing in a really epic way.’

assistant sits curled up on an orange couch, fact-checking the cook's quips. Nothing is pre-rehearsed. "It can only appear casual, natural, authentic, and relaxed if it really is," Roman says.

Still, she excels at branding: her signature orangey-red nail color and affinity for vintage speckled bowls scream Brooklyn ramshackle chic. Her life is aspirational yet accessible to the millennials who follow her: the newsletter reaches tens of thousands of subscribers across all 50 states, and her fans are mostly women ages 24 to 44, according to Roman's Instagram data.

Yet she takes umbrage at the idea that she's a "cool girl," a phrase often lobbed at her, and not always kindly. She thinks people are confusing insecurity for snobbery. "When I hear 'cool girl,' I think aloof, cold. But I'm pretty warm and friendly, I think?" she says. In fact, she started hosting dinner parties to manage her social anxiety. "I can recuse myself from the social activity while being social because I'm in the kitchen. I have a job to do."

But she is undeniably popular. Her recipes often go viral. Her Shallot Pasta, Labneh Dip, and Chocolate Chunk Shortbread Cookies were inescapable at dinner parties for years. Her acolytes will often post pictures of grocery stores ransacked of a specific ingredient in a new Alison Roman recipe.

That's no accident. In her pastry-chef days, she tried to conjure names for desserts that would help them sell. Now sometimes the name for a recipe comes to her before the recipe itself: Dilly Bean sounded whimsical and she reverse-engineered a recipe for stew with dill and beans.

It works. Even Ryan Murphy once reached out to say he is a fan. They went to dinner, and two years later he dropped her name in his Netflix series *The Watcher*. Her YouTube channel saw a flood of new followers unfamiliar with Roman—or her baggage.

SWEET ENOUGH INCLUDES a recipe for bread pudding from Nora Ephron's beloved novel *Heartburn*. The book chronicles, with thinly

disguised pseudonyms, Ephron's dramatic divorce from Carl Bernstein. Ephron, herself a famous dinner-party host, writes in *Heartburn* that "after a hard day, there is something comforting about the fact that if you melt butter and add flour and then hot stock, it will get thick! ... It's a sure thing in a world where nothing is sure."

Like Ephron, Roman cooked through chaos—even if it was of her own making. When her comments on Teigen and Kondo went viral, Roman's food came under scrutiny. People pointed out that her chickpea-stew recipe bore similarities to Indian chana masala. "I have tried to cook things that feel authentic to me and do a better job of hearing why people were upset and adjusting," she says. "But ultimately it wasn't like, 'I can never use this ingredient again.' It was, 'Here's a better way to handle it.'" Discussing the criticism over coffee, I expect Roman to be evasive. But she is open. "I'm not ashamed of who I am. I f-cked

up," she says. "But I never wanted to have 'a comeback.' It's like eating sh-t on the sidewalk. If you lay there, people are going to notice. But if you get right back up, you can rebound and keep moving."

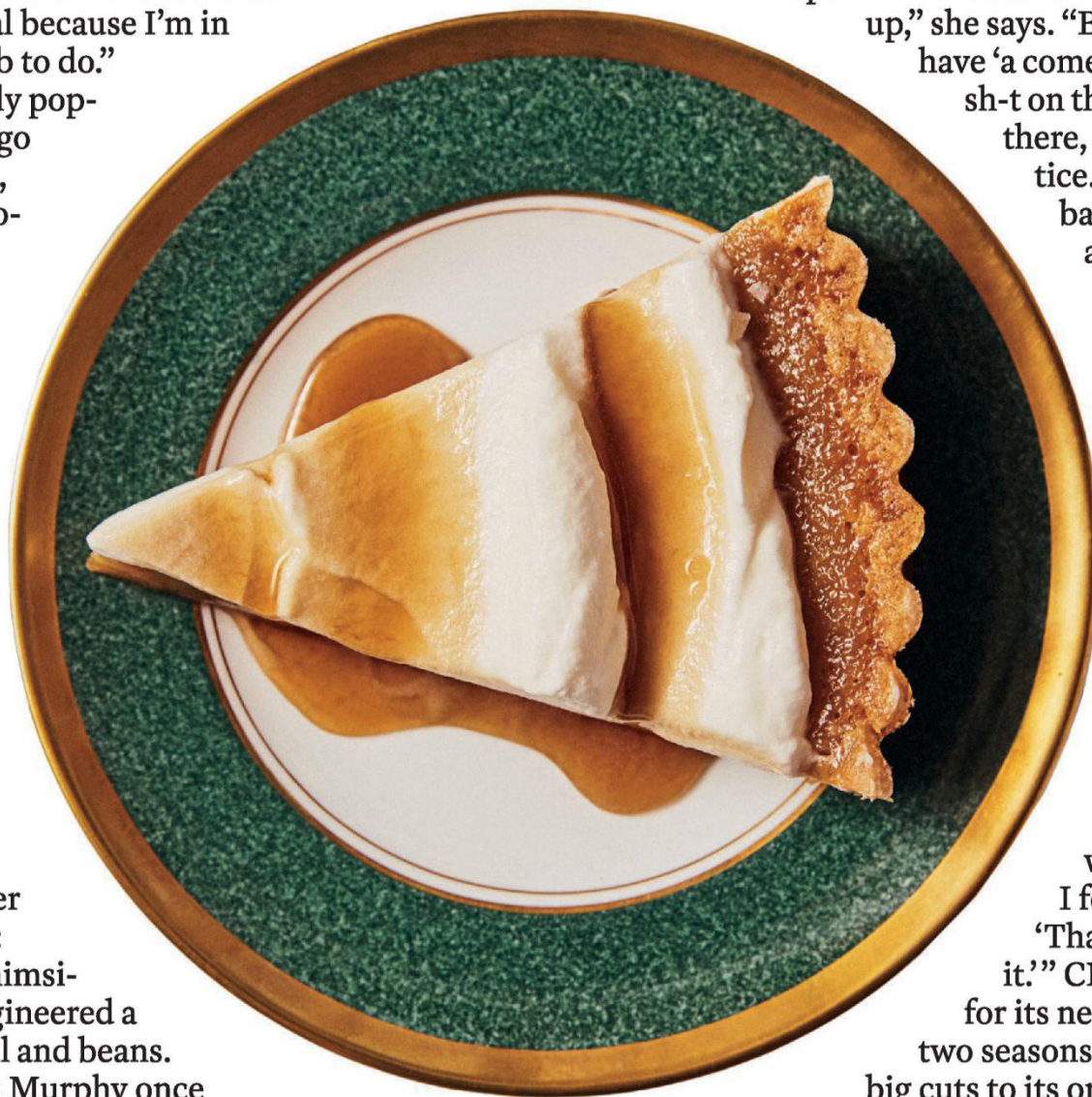
Keep moving she did, though not without fits and starts. She was set to host a show on CNN+ until the streamer abruptly shut down in 2022. She was in a meeting when it happened. "I had a million texts and calls, 'Are you OK?'" she says. "The last time this happened, my world fell apart. I was so scared. So when

I found out, I was like, 'That's fine. I'll get through it.'" CNN picked up the show

for its network, and Roman shot two seasons. But then CNN made big cuts to its original programming.

She is shopping it to other distributors.

For now, she's trying to maintain perspective. "I'm a fallible person who will probably make a mistake again. The goal isn't to be perfect. It's to evolve." She pauses. "Not to make it an allegory for baking, but every time I f-cked up a recipe, I learned something. It wasn't a waste of time. If you only ever succeed, you're probably pretty boring. You're probably not that resilient." □



^
Roman's desserts
are designed for
people who don't
usually bake

REVIEW

A heist gone wrong triggers a dark night of the soul

BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

IT'S A WONDER WE DIDN'T ALL GO MAD. HOW DID WE even survive the early days of the pandemic, a seemingly interminable epoch during which many of us spent long hours holed up in our sad little towers, captives in sweatpants gazing longingly at the outside world? Vasilis Katsoupis' intriguingly odd little psychological thriller *Inside* isn't a pandemic parable per se, but it's likely to resurrect some jittery memories of those days even so. A high-end art thief played by Willem Dafoe botches a burglary and finds himself trapped alone in an art-filled luxury penthouse, for hours that stretch into days. Will he get out, and if so, how? Meanwhile, what is all that time spent alone—not to mention all that art, which includes an elegantly haunting Egon Schiele self-portrait—doing to his brain?

There's a lot going on in this captivating, buzzingly cerebral picture. Written by Ben Hopkins, from an idea by Katsoupis, *Inside* is partly a black comedy about enforced solitude. But it's also about the ways art can sustain us even as it may incite feelings we'd rather not deal with, and it tangles with the messy process of creating art in the first place: for some, that creation is a compulsion, almost a prison break of the mind, a way to make sense of the entropy of the human psyche.

Inside is essentially a one-man extravaganza for Dafoe, and he shoulders its complexities ably, with zero vanity. At the film's beginning, Dafoe's Nemo is a confident heist-master, disabling alarm systems with ease and freeing

priceless pictures from the wall with a magician's deftness. The penthouse's zillionaire owner is in Kazakhstan for an unknown length of time, and he's set up complex technology to babysit his possessions while he's gone. None of this circuitry intimidates Nemo; he's studied it like a master.

UNTIL IT ALL goes haywire, and Nemo finds himself locked inside a luxury pad turned sinister. The temperature controls zig and zag with a mind of their own, leaving him sweating one minute and shivering the next. There's no running water. To amuse himself, Nemo contemplates the paintings and sculptures around him. (They include works from artists like Francesco Clemente, some specially commissioned for the film.) Before long, his response to his confinement becomes a work of art itself, one whose creation drives him into a semiferrous state. Dafoe is alive to every shift: When he strips down, his bony shoulders have a temple-like austerity. When he sweats, every pore seems alert. Some of these descent-into-madness transitions may not be easy to watch, but they're never, ever boring.

Inside is magnetic precisely because it doesn't hand over easy answers. It can feel arty and arch, a bit taken with its own somber cleverness. And then Katsoupis pulls off a hilarious little curlicue, like an interlude in which Nemo performs a cooking-show routine for an audience of no one. His meal of choice is pasta selected from the apartment's ever waning pantry staples, soaked overnight in cold water. He goes through the preparation steps, all two of them, with the affability of Ina Garten.

Even that little bit of pasta water is a precious commodity: it comes from a timed sprinkler that's been set up to hydrate one of the apartment's key features, a small, lush indoor forest. Nemo waits and waits to hear the hiss of that sprinkler, and when it finally comes, he flops down in this mini Eden and cackles with joy amid the glittering spray. It's a moment of heaven in a peculiar kind of hell. Leave it to Dafoe to make the most of every drop.

Stealing the show:
Dafoe plays an
art thief stranded
in an indoor
wilderness



INSIDE: FOCUS FEATURES; BOSTON STRANGLER; HULU; THE LOST KING: IFC FILMS



*Knightley as McLaughlin:
facing doubt head-on*

REVIEW

MULTIPLE MURDERS, NO EASY ANSWERS

In the early 1960s, a serial killer dubbed the Boston Strangler had that city wrapped in a knot of fear; the populace breathed easier when a convicted rapist named Albert DeSalvo confessed to the crimes. But newspaperwoman Loretta McLaughlin had doubts about whether DeSalvo had really committed all 13 of the murders attributed to the Strangler. Keira Knightley plays McLaughlin in writer-director Matt Ruskin's tense, absorbing *Boston Strangler*, which dramatizes both McLaughlin's initial investigation of the case—with the help of fellow journalist Jean Cole (Carrie Coon)—and her follow-up reporting after the case had been considered solved.

The city wanted the killer behind bars; it was inconvenient to face the possibility that the murders might have been committed by more than one man. But McLaughlin persisted, and *Boston Strangler* shows her clashing with a boss who has little faith in her (Chris Cooper, craggy in that old-style newsman way), as well as pushing against a local police department that just wants to see the case closed.

Knightley, in a performance as crisp as the corners of an envelope, makes McLaughlin's perseverance—and the pressures she faced as she also tried to be a good wife and mother—deeply believable. And the movie ends on the proper note of uncertainty: admitting what we don't know is always better than buying a lie. —S.Z.



Hawkins as Philippa Langley: understated and underestimated

REVIEW

An amateur researcher follows a hunch, and the rest is history

RICHARD III AS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER has a lot to answer for: Shakespeare painted him as a deformed, power-mad schemer. But Richard III as a real person? Evidence suggests he was more complicated than that. With his charming, sympathetic picture *The Lost King*, Stephen Frears digs into the fairly recent rehabilitation of the misunderstood monarch's legacy—as well as the 2012 discovery of his long-lost bones beneath a Leicester parking lot.

Sally Hawkins plays Philippa Langley, the real-life amateur historian instrumental in figuring out where, exactly, the last Plantagenet King had been buried. Hawkins' Philippa suffers from chronic fatigue syndrome, an illness that's not always taken seriously. She's close with her ex-husband (Steve Coogan), though even he occasionally loses patience with her. (Coogan and Jeff Pope wrote the script for *The Lost King*, adapting it from *The King's Grave: The Search for Richard III*, by

Langley and Michael Jones.) An encounter with a mansplaining Shakespeare expert—who has no idea what he's talking about—so aggravates Philippa that she's driven to learn more about the real Richard. Eventually, she persuades a top archaeologist (Mark Addy) to dig for the ruins of the church where Richard was said to have been interred, rather ignobly, in 1485.

Langley's conviction about that burial site was largely a ripple of intuition, and Hawkins plays her as a woman forced to fight skepticism and dismissal at every turn: she radiates a brazen confidence that shines through any surface impression of timidity. In the end, Philippa's understated persistence wins the day, leading her to a dramatic arrangement of bones that, given the fallen King's famous spinal curvature, are almost literally shaped like a question mark—though what they really represent, at long last, is the finality of an answer. —S.Z.



Valdes and Whitman make beautifully damaged music together

REVIEW

A meet-cute worth singing about

BY JUDY BERMAN

THE BROADWAY-TO-HOLLYWOOD pipeline has never been more active, and it's easy to see why. Streaming needs content. Theater needs revenue streams. Hence the glut of uneven-at-best musical adaptations. But bringing stage and screen talent together to create original stories can yield more-inspired results, as Hulu's *Up Here* so endearingly demonstrates. Scripted by Steven Levenson (*Dear Evan Hansen*) and sitcom vet Danielle Sanchez-Witzel (*New Girl*), with songs by Disney stalwarts Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, the series infuses Broadway magic into what might've been a mundane romantic comedy.

Mae Whitman stars as Lindsay, a good-girl aspiring author in Vermont who scrounges up the courage to dump her milquetoast fiancé and move to Manhattan in the fateful year of 1999. While her roommate is hooking up with a stranger in a bar bathroom, Lindsay—clad in period-appropriate squeaky PVC pants—

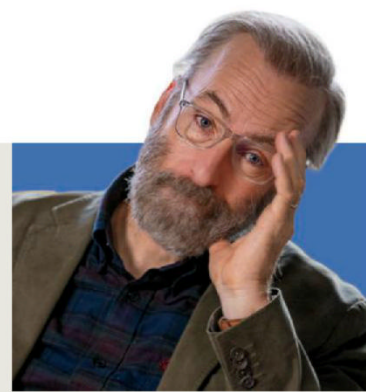
meets Miguel (Carlos Valdes), a sensitive finance guy struggling to fit in with fratty colleagues. They click, but things get complicated fast.

What elevates *Up Here* beyond rom-com boilerplate are the surreal musical numbers, which illuminate why Lindsay and Miguel keep sabotaging their relationship. Each surrounded by a chorus of critical people from their past—parents, rivals, exes—they belt out show tunes that cast doubt on the possibility of ever really knowing another person and R&B jams about why they'll

never fit in. Offbeat humor and earthy lyrics (on the plastic pants: "What if they're worth contracting yeast infections in?") ward off any whiff of saccharine. Like *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* with a neurotypical twist, *Up Here* gets that musical sequences are opportunities for introspection—and that nothing can make a brain go haywire like the vicissitudes of love.

**Like Crazy
Ex-Girlfriend
with a
neurotypical
twist**

Up Here arrives on Hulu on March 24



Same network, new beard:
Saul of academe

REVIEW

ODENKIRK PLAYS THE STRAIGHT MAN

Bob Odenkirk's return to AMC, eight months after the show-stopping finale of *Better Call Saul*, gets off to a worrisome start. As the title character of *Lucky Hank*, the cranky, professionally stunted chair of the English department at fictional Railton College, he delivers a writing-workshop rant (declaring the school a "mediocrity capital") that makes him a campus pariah. Hank's position is suddenly in jeopardy. His wife (Mireille Enos), a cheery high school vice principal, craves change. And their 20-something daughter (Olivia Scott Welch) needs money. Again.

It sounds a lot like Netflix's 2021 Sandra Oh vehicle *The Chair*, not to mention every nuance-free bit of discourse on "cancel culture" in academia. But thankfully, this adaptation of Richard Russo's 1997 novel *Straight Man* moves quickly past this exhausting setup—and a premiere plagued by stilted dialogue—to put Odenkirk at the center of a character study about an aging author whose decades of writer's block might have something to do with the fact that his estranged father is a famous literary critic. The show's focus soon expands to encompass the careerist maneuvers and petty feuds that consume Hank's entertainingly eccentric, undistinguished colleagues. It's a low-stakes story, but if campus drama is your flavor of narrative comfort food, dig in. —J.B.

Lucky Hank premieres March 19 on AMC

REVIEW

In pursuit of the elusive climate drama

IN THE NEAR FUTURE IMAGINED BY THE Apple TV+ sci-fi drama *Extrapolations*, humans have discovered how to communicate with humpback whales. One scientist, Sienna Miller's Rebecca Shearer, even translates a female humpback's song into English via the sonorous voice of Meryl Streep (who also plays Rebecca's mother). That's the good news. The bad news is that the creature is the last of its kind. Rebecca works for a company that is scrambling to preserve the genetic footprints of species that are going extinct because of global warming so that they can be reintroduced when someone figures out how to cool the world.

This juxtaposition of grand-scale catastrophe with glimmers of innovation and hope is typical of *Extrapolations*, an ambitious look at the potential fallout of climate change from *Contagion* writer and *An Inconvenient Truth* producer Scott Z. Burns. Featuring Diane Lane, Daveed Diggs, Edward Norton, Marion Cotillard, Forest Whitaker, Gemma Chan, and many more A-list talents, along with Streep and Miller, the eight-part series follows a rotating cast of characters through interconnected vignettes set between 2037 and 2070. It's a humane, carefully constructed but often frustrating project—and one that illustrates why insightful art about the climate crisis has proved so elusive.

While Burns seems to understand that viewers have already been inundated, in the news media as well as in fiction, with cold, bleak visions of the future, the series doesn't entirely escape dystopian tropes. A tech titan to end all tech titans, played by Kit Harington, whose presence haunts every episode, is as mercenary as you'd predict. Complacent, conservative dads disappoint children radicalized by an uncertain future. The weakest story, a cyberpunk thriller with Chan and Tahir Rahim involving uploaded memory and the gig economy, borrows too much from *Black Mirror* and *Blade Runner*.

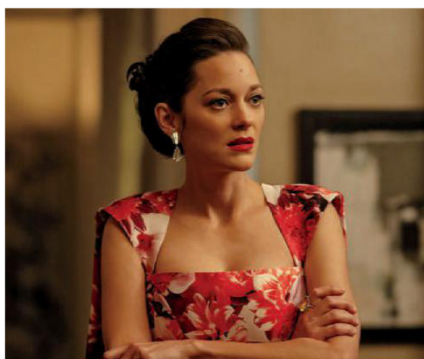
Yet the show mostly avoids lapsing into morbid inertness by moving fluidly between genres. With just a few exceptions, what ties together the disparate episodes is psychologically realistic portraits of complex characters forced to make excruciating choices. Cotillard is stunning in a chamber drama directed by Nicole Holofcener, as a woman whose husband (Whitaker) disrupts a New Year's Eve dinner party with shocking news. In an episode that applies a spiritual

lens to climate change, Diggs plays a Miami rabbi struggling, as rising waters threaten to flood his sanctuary and he contemplates bribing officials to secure government aid, to answer a young congregant's insistent question: "Why is God doing this to us?"

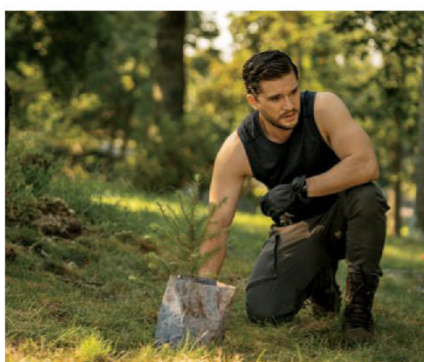
EXTRAPOLATIONS COVERS a remarkable amount of ground, traversing the globe from Washington, D.C., to Antarctica to the Middle East and registering the implications of an unprecedented cataclysm on technology, geopolitics, the economy, and human rights. But such a broad scope necessitates some unfortunate choices about what—and whom—to omit. For unknown reasons, political polarization in the U.S. and the rise of authoritarian governments around the world no longer seem to be factors by Burns' 2030s. With the exception of a tense episode about a Mumbai smuggler (Adarsh Gourav), the main characters are Westerners; most enjoy wealth and influence, unlike the billions on the front lines of environmental collapse, in the Global South.

While the series often works beautifully on the level of individual scripts, characters, and performances, it simply can't meet the challenge Burns sets up for himself, of extrapolating the next half-century in world events. No TV series could. Which might be why it overindulges in gratuitous set pieces, like a tonally dissonant sequence in which *Hamilton* breakout Diggs sings and dances to "Singin' in the Rain," before finally defaulting to truisms about human nature. "The problem has never been technology," one wise character concludes. "The problem is us." If this qualifies as a revelation in 2070, then the planet surely is doomed.

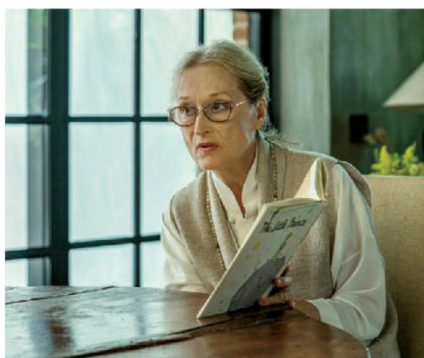
Still, those who think art is as crucial as science to our species' survival would like to believe no issue is too big for fiction. *Extrapolations* mistakes realism for insight, but at least it also lays a solid foundation for the many inevitable works on this topic to come. Maybe great art about climate change is only a time jump away. —J.B.



Cotillard confronts a futuristic marital rift



Harington plays a tech baron exploiting a crisis



Streep also gives voice to a female humpback



Diggs wades in the water of a flooded synagogue

Extrapolations debuts March 17 on Apple TV+

PODCASTS

Reading the (recording) room

BY MOISES MENDEZ II

ON FEB. 19, MANHATTAN'S BEACON THEATER was at capacity for a live taping of *The Read*, the beloved pop-culture podcast hosted by comedians Kid Fury and Crissle West. This show was particularly meaningful because they were celebrating the podcast's 10th anniversary. Given their profession, Fury and West are always talking, but when their introduction was met with prolonged, thunderous applause, just for a moment, they were silent. "I definitely had a moment backstage where I started to get emotional," West tells TIME a week later. "It's wild to see how far the show has gone."

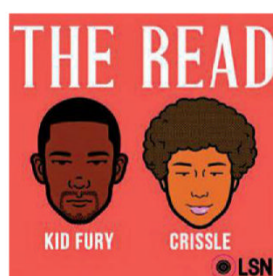
Since 2013, three Presidents and a never-ending list of celebrity antics have provided fodder for *The Read*. The format has largely stayed true to four segments: Black Excellence, which highlights a Black person they feel deserves it; Hot Tops, a pop-culture news segment; Listener Letters—pretty self-explanatory; and the titular Read, in which they rant about a person, place, or thing (think: Ron DeSantis' "Don't say gay" bills or Chris Brown's half-hearted apology after insulting the artist who beat him for a Grammy). These components along with their unscripted banter, Fury's quick quips, and West's belly laugh lend a sincere quality to the podcast that has garnered it 2.5 million plays per month and fans in more than 50 countries. Those fans include celebrities like Missy Elliott and Issa Rae, who tapped West to co-host the official *Insecure* recap podcast and Fury for the writers' room of her HBO series *Rap Sh!t*.

Bashful as they were about their fans' adoration at the live show, West and Fury don't mince words when reflecting on what has allowed *The Read* to flourish in an increasingly saturated podcast landscape. "I don't think people require that much from us besides the versions of us we've given so far, which has just been regular, honest, Black folk," Fury says. West agrees: "The show's success is because we are who we are."

WEST AND FURY had been friends long before the podcast came about, first on Twitter, then via long-distance text between New York City (West) and Miami (Fury). After moving to New York, Fury turned to West one day while waiting in line to see *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart* and asked if she wanted to join him in a podcast venture he'd been offered by Chris Morrow, CEO and co-founder of Loud Speakers Network. Their



West, left, and Fury have a banter made in podcasting heaven



The podcast has amassed more than 250 million all-time plays

first episode was released on March 4, 2013.

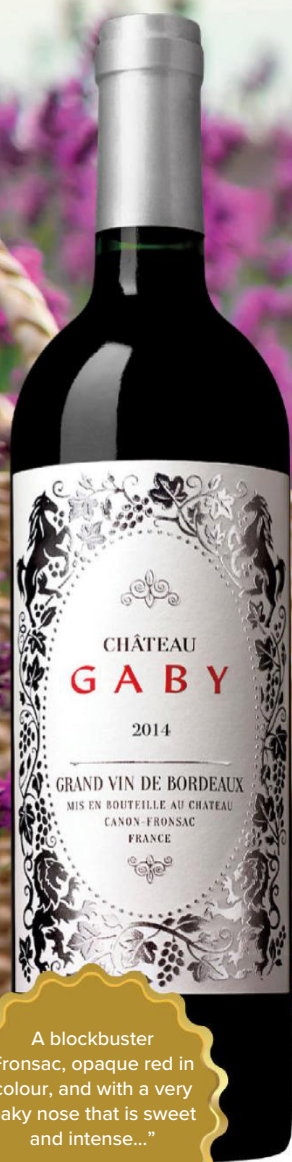
Since then, the podcasting landscape has shifted drastically. Many have attempted to replicate their style—two friends behind a microphone, cracking jokes and offering advice—but in today's crowded marketplace, it's harder than ever to break through as a newcomer without a significant pre-existing platform, and the gulf between upstarts and those with multimillion-dollar Spotify deals is wide. Fury and West's casual, organic vibe has been key to their longevity. "I don't think that people require that much from us," says Fury. "A lot of the difficulty is trying to stay out of my head when it comes to the creative aspect of it." The duo also provide a rare safe space for the Black queer community that has helped cultivate so many devoted listeners.

These days, West and Fury have their hands in more than podcasting. Fury announced the revival of his popular YouTube channel, which he will convert into podcast form. West is currently getting her master's in mental-health counseling, in what feels like a natural progression, given the mindful advice she offers listeners. The duo is also working on a comedy album on Rae's label, Raedio.

These endeavors have led fans to fear *The Read* may be in its final chapter. But the co-hosts say it isn't so. "Five years came and went, then magically it was 10," says West. "I think about how much we have both changed." But for now, they just check in with each other as any good friends do. "What we always land on is 'If you good, I'm good,'" says Fury. "When you're done, let me know. Until then, let's have a ball."

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Whitney Wolfe Herd The Bumble CEO on the sneakiness of postpartum depression, the best part of parenting, and taking life one hour at a time

You're one of a very small number of billionaire CEOs who is also the mother of two kids under 4. So ... how are you holding up? It's so interesting, the different experiences I've had now with having two kids. I was in such a big postpartum-depression place at nine months with Bobby. Nine months with Bobby was very different than nine months with Henry.

Can you tell me a little bit about your postpartum depression?

Bobby was born in 2019. And right when Bobby was being born, we finalized the deal with Blackstone [which made Wolfe Herd CEO of Bumble]. And within a few days, the Bobby he was named after passed away. My husband was grieving his grandfather while we were trying to celebrate this new soul. And in that meantime, I got extremely sick five days postpartum with postpartum preeclampsia. And then the world shut down. It just sent me into postpartum depression, but I didn't realize I had it. Postpartum depression is sneaky. It's like: you know you're not OK, but you don't know that you're not OK.

How do you deal with the exhaustion of being a CEO with two small children? I don't like the term *working mom*. I think every mother is a working mom. There is not a mom out there that is not working. Everyone says, "One day at a time." I actually prefer "one hour at a time." I don't judge any other mom, but I personally can't do the "cry it out." It's just not for me. I have friends that have the best life ever because they did "cry it out." And their children are incredible. Listen, there are days I feel like a superwoman, and there are days that I feel like crying all day long.

Can you tell me about a time when you felt like a total parenting failure?

Um, last night? Not being able to get him to sleep, and then at 1 a.m. putting my head in my hands, like: What did I do? What have I done wrong? Why am I so bad at this?

Find more interviews at time.com/parent-files



How does your mom guilt manifest itself? I have mom guilt right now being on the phone with you instead of sitting and staring at my kids. What are you gonna do? You can't escape it. It's permanent. What I try to remind myself is: I don't think we're meant to lose ourselves. I think we're just meant to evolve and grow and expand, but not shrink. I can't feel guilty for doing the things that brought me joy pre-baby, or were part of who I was as an individual. When you think about it that way, it helps reframe that guilt.

What's your most valuable piece of parenting advice? Everything is a phase. The good and the bad. The cutest baby cuddles, you think it's there forever, and it's gone. But then the nights of endless "Mommy, Mommy, where are you, come help me?" That's not gone yet, but I know it will be gone. Everything feels like forever, but it's not. And: they'll eat when they're hungry, they'll sleep when they're tired, and we're all doing the best we can.

How did becoming a mom change your approach to your work?

It made me want to lean further in to Bumble. I had been trying to improve the world for the women around me, but then I realized there's this next generation. It gave me a whole new level of purpose.

So how has this experience shaped you? I'm present for the first time in my life. When you're out there building a career, you're looking over different shoulders, you're looking backwards and forwards, it's like you're driving 20 cars at once. When I'm in the presence of my children, I'm actually for the first time a present human being. They just taught me how to be. —CHARLOTTE ALTER

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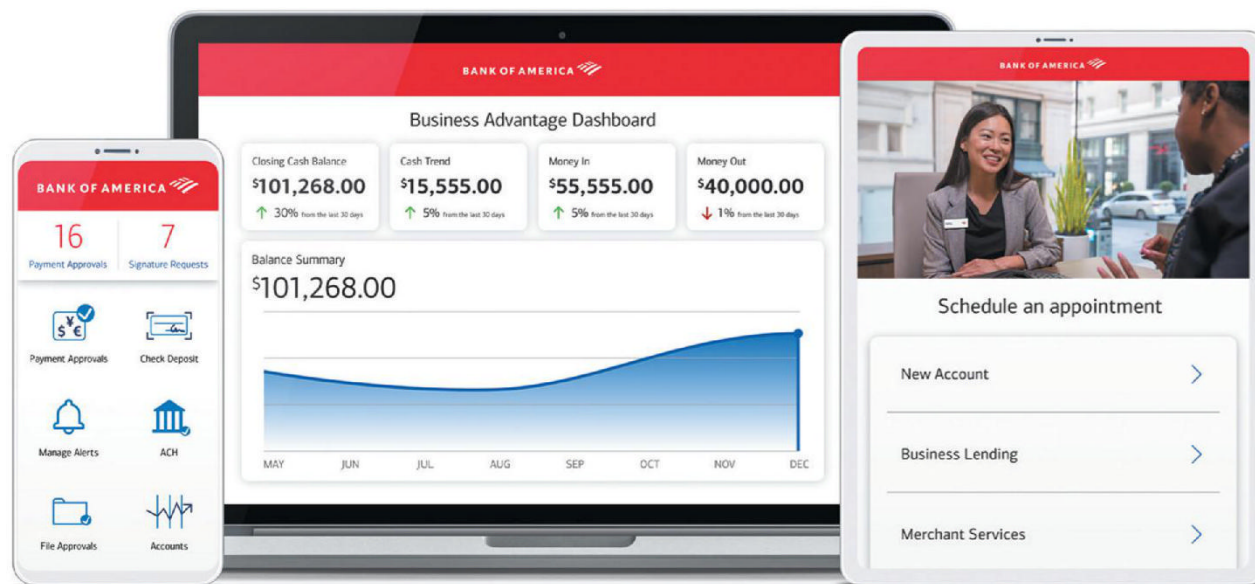
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